THE

CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

NO. XII.

CONTAINING

A KEY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT,

giving

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SEVERAL BOOKS, THEIR CONTENTS, THEIR AUTHORS,

and of

THE TIMES, PLACES, AND OCCASIONS,

ON WHICH THEY WERE RESPECTIVELY WRITTEN.

C

To the

HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

SHUTE,

LORD BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

My Lord,

THE favourable opinion, which your Lordship was pleased to entertain of this little Work in the first Edition, has induced me to give it a Revisal, and, by removing some inaccuracies, to render it less unworthy your acceptance.

That so slight a performance should have been able to attract your notice, I must attribute to that vigilant, unremitted attention, which so eminently distinguishes your Lordship's conduct; and makes you esteem no attempt undeserving your regard, which has the remotest tendency to promote the interests of religion or learning.

That this little manual may be of some use, especially to the Youth of both Sexes, I am encouraged to hope, from the candid reception it has met with in our Universities, where, I am told, some of the Tutors have adopted it, as a proper compendium to be put into the hands of the younger Students at their entrance

on a course of sacred literature. If it contributes in any degree to make the Holy Scriptures more attentively read and better understood, I shall esteem it a peculiar happiness to have had this opportunity of testifying the sincere respect, with which I am,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most obliged and

Faithful Servant,

Thomas Percy.

MDCCLXXIII.

PREFACE.

A CLEAR, introductory illustration of the several Books of the NEW TESTAMENT, shewing the design of their writers, the nature of their contents, and whatever else is previously necessary to their being read with understanding, is a work, that, if well executed, must prove the best of commentaries, and frequently supersede the want of all other. Like an intelligent guide, it directs the Reader right at his first setting out, and thereby saves him the trouble of much after-inquiry: Or, like a map of a country, through which

he is to travel; if consulted beforehand, it gives him a general view of the journey, and prevents his being afterwards lost and bewildered.

That the following little work will be found to answer this flattering description, the Compiler dares not take upon him to assert; he can only say, that the contents are chiefly extracted from two eminent Writers, who have particularly distinguished themselves in this branch of sacred criticism, and have lately thrown a great light upon the subject.

The first of these is, Mr. Professor MICHAELIS, of his majesty's university of Gottingen, whose "Introductory Lectures to the "sacred Books of the New Testament," translated from the German, were published, in one volume quarto, in 1761*. The other

* Since this translation of Mr. MICHAELIS's Book was published, that eminent Writer has very much improved and enlarged his Work in the original German; and it will give satisfaction to the learned Reader to be informed, that a Translation of this excellent Performance, with all the additions and improvements of the deceased Author, may soon be expected

is the Rev. Dr. LARDNER, whose "History "of the Apostles and Evangelists, writers of "the New Testament, with Remarks and "Observations on every Book," was printed in three Volumes 8vo. in 1760. The former of these has displayed so much ingenuity and discernment, and the latter such a depth of learning, as give the greatest advantage to such as would avail themselves of their labours.

But as their works are not of portable size, and contain a multitude of curious disquisitions not within the reach of the generality of readers, the editor was tempted to give a short abstract of their respective contents, cleared from all miscellaneous digressions, and reduced within a small compass for the pocket. He has not, however, merely confined himself to those two writers, but has enriched his work from other authors; thus in the Key to the writings of the several Evangelists, a

full account is given of the curious Hypothesis of the learned and ingenious Dr. OWEN, who, in his "Observations on the Four Gospels," 8vo. 1764, has opened a new source of information, and, by comparing the original language of the several Evangelists, has started many new hints, which had escaped former inquirers. If the Doctor should find a difficulty proposed, in the following pages, in respect to one part of his scheme: he will also see a solution offered, which the editor apprehends will give new strength and consistency to the whole argument.

Besides these late writers, recourse was occasionally had to the learned and useful labours of PYLE, DODDRIDGE, BENGELIUS, DUPIN, and other former Criticks and Commentators; from each of whom such parts were selected as seemed most solid and judicious; forming, in the whole, what, it is hoped, will be found a clear, concise, and not in-

consistent compilation; in which the editor frankly acknowledges that very little will be found of his own, and that he has no other merit than that of bringing into one compendium whatever he thought was most excellent in so many valuable writers.

After this little work was first committed to the press, the editor was favoured by an ingenious friend with the short Account of the several Sects and Heresies that prevailed in the times of CHRIST and his Apostles. A general knowledge of those is so necessary to our right understanding the sacred writings, in which one or other of them are constantly alluded to, that this work would have been imperfect without it; it is therefore prefixed, by way of INTRODUCTION. In compiling this brief sketch, the writer acknowledges himself indebted not only to the valuable works of GODWYN, PRIDEAUX, CALMET, and STACKHOUSE, but to the very learned

System of Ecclesiastical History by Mr. Chancellor Mosheim, of the University of Gottingen.

To the same friend the editor is also indebted for the short Analysis, or Key, to the Prophecies contained in the Revelations, with which this little book is concluded.

M.DCC.LXV.

CONTENTS.

Introduction.

I. Of the Jewish Sects, or Parties . . . . Page 15
II. Of the Christian Sects or Heresies 24
The Chronology of Christ's publick Ministry . . . 34

Key to the New Testament.

The meaning of the Words, Scripture, Bible, New Testament, Gospel, ... 39
The Order of the Four Gospels 43
St. Matthew's Gospel 48
St. Mark's 57
St. Luke's 64
St. John's 71
Acts of the Apostles 78
The Order of the Epistles 83
To the Romans 87
The First to the Corinthians 97
The Second to the Corinthians 102
To the Galatians 105
To the Ephesians 108
To the Philippians 111
To the Colossians 113
The First to the Thessalonians 115

The Second to the Thessalonians . . . . Page 118
The First to Timothy 118
The Second to Timothy 122
To Titus 123
To Philemon 126
To the Hebrews 128
Of St. James 135
The First of St. Peter 137
The Second of St. Peter 139
The First of St. John 141
The Second and Third of St. John 142
Of St. Jude 143
The Revelation of St. John 144
Key to the Prophecies in the Revelation 150

INTRODUCTION.

I.

OF THE JEWISH SECTS,

OR

PARTIES ALLUDED TO IN THE GOSPELS.

II.

OF THE CHRISTIAN SECTS,

OR

HERESIES ALLUDED TO IN THE EPISTLES.

OF

THE JEWISH SECTS,

OR PARTIES ALLUDED TO IN THE GOSPELS.

THE PHARISEES.

THE PHARISEES were a sect among the Jews, that had subsisted at least above a century and half before the appearance of our Saviour. They affected the most profound regard for the Law of God, and the sacred Books; but for the interpretation of them, and the manner in which they were to be obeyed, they depended chiefly upon traditional accounts. These traditions encumbered religion with a thousand frivolous observances, which drew off the mind from the more important matters of the law; and made men look upon themselves as holy and acceptable to God, not so much from their moral conduct, and observance of divine institutions, as from their conformity to certain modes and punctil-

ios of mere human invention, introduced among them under pretence of being the Traditions of the Elders.* Hence their more than ordinary strictness in wearing the PHYLACTERY, and singularity in enlarging the BORDERS or FRINGES of their garments.† Hence their superstition about the Sabbath, as if it had been unlawful on that day to walk in the fields, or to pluck the ears of corn, or to cure the sick, or to aid one's neighbour. Hence too their peculiar zeal and pretence to purity, in the demureness with which they fasted, the exactness with which they paid their tithes, the ostentation with which they prayed, performing that duty not only aloud, but in the most publick turnings of the streets; the ardour with which they encompassed sea and land to make proselytes or converts to their sect; their frequent washing, not only of themselves, but of their vestments and utensils; and their holding at a distance, or separating themselves not only from Pagans, but from all such Jews as

* i. e. Ancients.

† The PHYLACTERIES were little scrolls of parchment bound to their foreheads and wrists, on which were written texts of Scripture, taken from Exod. xiii. 9. 16. and Deut. vi. 8. xi. 18. With regard to their BORDERS and FRINGES, the reader will find the origin of this distinction in Numb. xv. 38 Deut. xxii. 12.

complied not with their peculiarities. To this last circumstance they seem to have owed the name of their sect; the word PHARISEE being derived from a verb in the Hebrew,† which signifies to DIVIDE or SEPARATE. This sect, however, not only held the soul to be immortal, but had some slight notions of a resurrection, believing that on some occasions the soul might again re-animate a body: Whence their conjecture about Christ upon his first appearance, that he was either John the Baptist, or Elias, or one of the old prophets; and hence too, notwithstanding the violence with which they had opposed the personal ministry of Jesus, that aptitude they displayed in after-times, beyond some of the other Jewish sects, to fall-in with his Revelation.

THE SCRIBES.

THE word SCRIBES, as that denomination occurs in the New Testament, appears to be the title not of any particular sect, distinguished from all others as to their modes of practice, or belief; but a general term, applicable to all

† פרש, *Pharash*, To divide.

those of whatever sect, who made the Law of Moses and the prophetical and sacred books their peculiar study, so as to become capable of commenting upon them, and thence of publickly instructing the people. This office seems, however, to have been confined to the descendants of Levi, who being very numerous, and not at all times engaged in the immediate service of the temple, had leisure and opportunity enough to qualify themselves for this duty, being unembarrassed with secular employments, and liberally provided for among all the other tribes. It appears indeed from the frequent mention that is made in the Gospel of the Scribes and Pharisees in conjunction, that the greatest number of Jewish Teachers or Doctors of the Law,* for these are expressions equivalent to SCRIBE, were at that time of the Pharisaical sect. In the Old Testament, we meet with the term SCRIBE in a secular sense, as denoting sometimes a secretary of state,† sometimes a principal clerk in a court of judicature,‡ and sometimes a commissary or mus-

* So the original word should have been rendered, where in our translation it is improperly expressed by the modern term, LAWYERS.

† 2 Sam. viii. 17. xx. 25.

‡ Matt. ii. 4. 1 Maccab. v. 42.

ter-master in the army ;§ and altho' it is probable that a duly qualified man belonging to any of the other tribes might be admitted into any of these employments, yet the superiour opportunity that the descendants of Levi enjoyed for all sorts of literary improvements, renders it likely that they were generally preferred, especially in ancient times, even to these departments.

THE SADDUCES.

THE most ancient sect among the Jews was that of the SADDUCES. This name may either be derived from the Hebrew word SEDEC, which signifies JUSTICE ; or from a certain teacher among the Jews called SADOC. The former seems to have been the origin of the appellation, according to the account of the Sadduces themselves ; the latter, according to the account given of them by the Pharisees in the Talmud. If we admit the former derivation, it assigns no fixed date to the antiquity of this sect ; if the latter, it ascertains their rise to have been but a few years before that of the Pharisees. But be this as it may,

§ 2 Chron. xxvi. 11. 2 Kings xxv. 19.

the Sadduces seem to have been originally strict adherents to the Mosaic institution, and to the Canonical books, only interpreting them in the most literal sense, and rejecting all other explications. The superiour estimation in which they held the Pentateuch, or writings of Moses, to all other compositions in the sacred collection, gave rise in all probability to the report of their adversaries, that they entirely rejected the authority of the rest: and the doubts they entertained about a future state, a doctrine not clearly revealed in the writings of Moses, and about any appearance of angels or spirits among men, since the finishing of the Jewish Canon, seem to have at first given a handle to the Pharisees of rendering them suspected of irreligion, which in all probability was afterwards confirmed by men of loose principles sheltering themselves under their name. This however is certain, that at the time of our Saviour this sect is reputed to have held doctrines that were thoroughly impious.* For they are said to have denied the resurrection of the dead, the being of angels, and all existence of the spirits or souls of men departed. It was their opinion, that there is no spir-

* Vide Prideaux.

itual Being but God only; that as to man, this world is his all; that, at his death, body and soul die together never to live more; and that therefore there is no future reward nor punishment. They acknowledged that God made this world by his power, and governs it by his providence; and, for the carrying on of this government, hath ordained rewards and punishments, but that they do not extend beyond this world. In a word, they seem to have been Epicureans in all respects, excepting only that they allowed that God made the world by his power, and governs it by his providence. At the same time that they held these loose notions, they are said to have had a bigoted attachment to the law of Moses; and, whether it proceeded from this, or their considering our Saviour as a seditious person, they soon joined with the Pharisees in bringing Christ and his disciples to death; for Caiaphas, who was of this sect, and who was High-priest of the Jews at that time, was he who condemned Jesus to be crucified; and Ananus the younger,† another of this sect, put to death St. James, the brother of our Lord.

† Son of Annas the High-priest, mentioned in the Gospel; who is also called Ananus, by Josephus.

THE HERODIANS.

Of the HERODIANS we meet with nothing among ancient writers, except in the New Testament itself; where also mention is made of certain GALILÆANS, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, and who are described elsewhere in the New Testament as having made an insurrection against the government, and are called Murderers, or Sicarii.* The learned Calmet takes an opportunity hence of imputing to those called Herodians whatever was done by these Galilæans, and thinks they were called HERODIANS by the other Jews, because Galilee at that time was under the command of HEROD, surnamed ANTIPAS. But when we reflect that this insurrection happened long before Christ entered upon his publick ministry, even as early as the 10th year of his age, when the Insurgents were entirely routed, and the party dispersed; whereas the Herodians are mentioned as still flourishing at the very time when Christ was employed in his mission;

* Acts xxi. 38. See the further account of this Sect, or Party, p. 26, under the name of GAULANITES.

we cannot forbear assenting to the judicious conjectures of Dr. Prideaux and others, who look upon the Herodians not as a religious sect, but a political party, who began to become eminent in the days of Herod the Great, as favouring his claims, and those of his patrons the Romans, to the sovereignty of Judea. Some of these, no doubt, might be weak enough to imagine that Herod was the Messiah, or wicked enough to pretend that they did, in order to serve his cause; and would be ready to vindicate his conduct, when, the better to pay his court to the Romans, he consecrated temples to some of their false deities. And this party having begun in the time of Herod the Great, may well be supposed to have continued long afterwards in favour and power, by the indulgence of the Herods, and influence of the Romans. That leaven therefore of theirs, against which our Saviour warns his hearers,* must in this case have been, either their false conceptions of the Messiah, or their pliantness and conformity to Idol-worship, or both.

* Mark viii. 15.

OF

THE CHRISTIAN SECTS,

OR HERESIES ALLUDED TO IN THE EPISTLES.

WHEN the religion of Jesus began to be spread abroad in the world, it had not only to struggle with avowed adversaries, such as the JEW and the PAGAN, by whom its professors were exposed to all manner of external disgrace and calamities; but it had to support itself in its native purity, dignity, and excellence, against the corrupt doctrines which many of those whom it received into its community had brought with them from the Jewish or Pagan systems; for under these two denominations were all mankind at that time included; and both so very corrupt, as to be far more capable of imparting infection, than of becoming pure.

I.

OF the JEWS who became Christians, there were, besides such as had been of the sect of the PHARISEES, &c. others that had imbibed

the particular opinions of the ESSENES and the GAULANITES.

THE ESSENES.

THE ESSENES seem to have been of a very remote antiquity. They might take their rise from that dispersion of their nation, which happened after their being carried captive into Babylon. The principal character of this sect was, that they chose retirement, were sober, were industrious; had all things in common; paid the highest regard to the moral precepts of the law, but neglected the ceremonial, any farther than what regarded bodily cleanliness, the observation of the Sabbath, and making an annual present to the temple at Jerusalem. They never associated with women, nor admitted them into their retreats; but gladly embraced every fair opportunity of supporting and enlarging their society, by rearing, breeding, educating, and instructing other men's children, as if they had been their own. By the most sacred vows, though they were in general averse to swearing, or to requiring an oath, they bound all whom they initiated among them, to the observance of

piety, justice, fidelity, and modesty; to conceal the secrets of the fraternity, preserve the books of their instructors, and with great care commemorate the names of the angels. To them in all likelihood the Apostle alludes, when he inveighs against those who forbid to marry, who command to abstain from meat, and who, through a voluntary humility, pay worship to angels. But a more particular description of these errors the reader will find below in the account of the 1st Epistle to Timothy.

THE GAULANITES.

THE GAULANITES were Galileans, who had this name given them from one Judas Theudas, a native of GAULAN in upper Galilee; who in the 10th year of Jesus Christ, which was the last of Augustus, and ten years after the death of Herod the Great, excited his countrymen the Galileans, and many others of the Jews, to take arms and venture upon all extremities, rather than pay tribute to the Romans. The principles he infused into his party were, not only that they were a free nation, and ought to be in subjection to no oth-

er, but that they were the elect of God, that he alone was their governour, and that, therefore, they ought not to submit to any ordinance of man. And though he was unsuccessful, insomuch that his party in their very first attempt were intirely routed and dispersed; yet so deeply had he infused his own enthusiasm into their minds, that they never rested, till in their own destruction they involved the city and temple. To this wild and fanatick party seem to be addressed many of those passages in the New Testament, wherein obedience to magistracy is so piously and rationally inculcated.

THE NAZAREENS.

THE Pharisees seem to have composed the chief body of those Christian converts, who in the earlier times were distinguished by the appellation of NAZAREENS. These, though they embraced Christianity, yet entered so little into the real spirit and genius of it, that they were still fond of the beggarly elements and carnal ornaments of the Ceremonial Law. To repress this their inordinate superstition, seems to have been the intention of the sever-

ity with which the Law is treated in the Apostolick writings, where not only circumcision is exclaimed against, but we are taught to let no man judge us with regard to meats or drinks, or the observance of holy days, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath; which were a shadow of things to come, whereof Christ is the substance.*

II.

THE GNOSTICS.

Of the GENTILES who were converted to Christianity, the most dangerous and pernicious kind were those who were infected with the EGYPTIAN PHILOSOPHY; a system, as it was then taught, intirely chimerical and absurd. The Christians of this sort assumed to themselves the name of GNOSTICS; a word of Greek derivation, implying a knowledge superior to that of other men. This word does not occur in the New Testament; but

THE NICOLAITANS,

of whom mention is made in the Apocalypse

* See Col. ii. 16, &c.

of St. John,* seem to have been of the GNOSTIC sect; as were also

THE CERINTHIANS;

for most of the errors† maintained by CERINTHUS, and opposed in the gospel of St. John, may be derived from the same source.

When we say the Gentile converts were chiefly liable to the GNOSTIC infection, we must not be understood to exclude those of the Jewish race, many of whom were tainted with it, but they seem to have derived it from the Essenes.‡

THE EGYPTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

THE maintainers of this philosophy held, that the supreme Being, though infinitely perfect and happy, was not the creator of the universe, nor the only independent being: for, according to them, Matter too was eternal. The supreme Being, who resides in the immensity of space, which they called *Pleroma*, or fulness, produced from himself, say

* See this Sect described in a Note to Revelations.

† See them described at large in the account of St. John's Gospel.

‡ See the account of the first Epistle to Timothy, &c.

they, other immortal and spiritual natures, stiled by them *Æons*,* who filled the residence of the Deity with beings similar to themselves. Of these beings, some were placed in the higher regions, others in the lower. Those in the lower regions were nighest to the place of matter, which originally was an inert and formless mass, till one of them, without any commission from the Deity, and merely to shew his own dexterity, reduced it into form and order, and enlivened some parts of it with animal spirit. The Being who atchieved all this, they called the DEMIURGUS.† But such was the perverseness of matter, that, when brought into form, it was the source of all evil. The supreme Being, therefore, never intended to have given it a form; but as that had been now done, he, in order to prevent mischief as much as possible, added to the animal spirit of many of the enlivened parts, rational powers. The parts to whom rational powers were thus given, were the original

* *Æon* in Greek, properly signifies the Age of man, but having been employed by philosophers to express the duration of spiritual and invisible beings, the Beings themselves were afterwards figuratively called *Æons*, or Durations, &c.

† i. e. The operator, artificer, or workman.

parents of the human race; the other animated parts were the brute creation. Unluckily, however, the interposition of the supreme Being was in vain; for the Demiurgus grew so aspiring that he seduced men from their allegiance to the supreme Being, and diverted all their devotion to himself.

These are the outlines of this fantastick philosophy. The corruptions flowing from it, when adapted to Christianity, were these, They held that the God of the Jews was the DEMIURGUS; that to overthrow and subvert the power and dominion of this Demiurgus, JESUS, one of the celestial Æons, was sent by the supreme Being to enter into the body of the man CHRIST, in the shape of a dove; that Christ by his miracles and sufferings, subverted the kingdom of the DEMIURGUS; but when he came to suffer, the Æon Jesus carried along with himself the soul of Christ, and left behind upon the cross, only his body and animal spirit: that the Old Testament ought to be rejected, as having been the means whereby the DEMIURGUS supported his influence among men; that the serpent, who deceived Eve, ought to be honoured, for

endeavouring to rescue men from their slavery to the DEMIURGUS; and finally that they ought not to marry, or procreate children, because, in so doing, we generate matter, which is the source of all evil; and that there is no resurrection of the body, because the body is material.

Against this philosophy, and not against true science of any kind, are all those texts of the New Testament levelled, which seem to arraign philosophy. This is that philosophy which is there described as vain, deceitful, traditionary, formed upon the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. These are the profane and old wives' fables; the endless genealogies, vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called, which we are to reject, and not to give heed to. And of these Sophists, or Gnostics, as they called themselves, the Apostles write, when they say, "There are certain men crept in unawares, "who were before of old ordained to this con- "demnation; ungodly men, turning the grace "of our God into lasciviousness, and denying "the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus

"Christ."* And again, "Now if Christ be "preached that he rose from the dead, how "say some among you, that there is no resur- "rection of the dead?"†

* Jude 4. † 1 Cor. xv. 12.

To this INTRODUCTION *may not improperly be subjoined a short* ABSTRACT *of the* CHRONOLOGY *of Our Lord's Publick Ministry, as proposed by* Sir ISAAC NEWTON, *and some other criticks, who make it to have lasted five Passovers: But the more general opinion is, that it only continued three years, and was included in four Passovers. Some criticks reduce it even to a still shorter period.*—See the controversy on this subject between Dr. NEWTON, Bishop of Waterford, and Dr. PRIESTLEY.

It is here copied from Mr. BOYER'S CONJECTURES *on the New Testament, &c.* 8vo. 1772, *a work equally learned and curious. See his preface, page* 31.

A CHRONOLOGY

OF CHRIST'S PUBLICK MINISTRY.

THE fifteenth of Tiberius began Aug. 19, in the year 4742, of the Julian Period. (Tiberius's reign began Aug. 19, An. J. P. 4727. A. D. 14.) So soon as winter was over and the weather became warm enough, John began to baptize. Luke iii. 1. [Suppose in March.]

A. D. 31. Tib. 16-17. The FIRST PASSOVER, John ii. 33. Wednesday, Mar. 28, after Christ's baptism, (which was, we may suppose, in September, the 17th of Tiberius not beginning till Aug. 19.); he came into Judea: staid baptizing there while John was baptizing in Ænon. John iii. 22. 23.

John cast into prison in November. About the time of the winter Solstice [in December], four months before the harvest, Jesus Christ went thro' Samaria into Canna of Galilee, Matt. iv. 12. A nobleman of Capernaum went to him there, and desired he would come and heal his son. He did not go, but said, "Go, thy son liveth." John iv.

A.D. Tib. After some time there, he passed thro' the midst of the people, and dwelt in Capernaum. Luke iv.

32. 17-18. The SECOND PASSOVER, Monday, Apr. 14. He called Peter, Andrew, James, and John: Preached the sermon on the Mount, Matt. v.; whither multitudes followed him from Jerusalem, where he had been at the Feast. When the winter was coming on, He went to the Feast of the TABERNACLES in September. Matt. viii. 19. 23. Luke ix. 51. 57.

He went about the villages of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and working many miracles, Matt. ix. Sent forth the twelve, Matt. x. Received a message from John the Baptist. Upbraided the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, because they repented not, Matt. xi. which shews there was a considerable time from the imprisonment of John till now.

33. 18-19. The THIRD PASSOVER, Friday, Apr. 3. After which the disciples, going through the cornfields, rubbed the ears in their hands, Matt. xii. Luke vi. 1. δευτεροπρώτῳ, "on the second prime Sabbath," that is, the second

A.D. Tib. of the two great feasts of the passover ; as we say, LOW SUNDAY.

He healed a man on the sabbath-day. Matt. xii. 9. Luke vi. 6.

The Pharisees consulted to destroy him, when he withdrew himself. Matt. xii. 14.

He spake in a ship three parables, one one of the seedsmen sowing in the fields, Matt. xiii. ; whence we may infer it was now seed time, and that the Feast of the Tabernacles in Sept. or Oct. was past.

He went into his own country, and taught in the synagogues ; but did not any mighty work, because of their unbelief. The Twelve returned, having been abroad a year, and told him of John's being beheaded. He departed privately in a ship to Bethsaida. Fed five thousand in the desert. Matt. xiv. Luke ix. John vi. 4.

34. 19-20. The FOURTH PASSOVER, Friday, Apr. 23. John vi. 4, to which he went up, John vii. 1. Henceforward he was found on the coast of Tyre and Sidon ; then by the sea of Galilee, next on the coast of Cæsarea Philippi, and lastly at Capernaum, Matt. xv. 21.29.

A.D. Tib. xvi. 3. xvii. 34. Went privately to the Feast of Tabernacles in Autumn, John vii. 2. The Jews thought to stone him, but he escaped, John viii. 59. Went to the Feast of Dedication in Winter, John x. 22. The Jews seeking to kill him, he fled beyond Jordan, John x. 39, 40. Matt. xix. 1. On the death of Lazarus came to Bethany, John xi. 7. 18. walked no more openly, but retired to Ephraim, a city in the wilderness, till

35. 20. The FIFTH and LAST PASSOVER, Wednesday, Apr. 13. John xi. 53—55. In the Consulship of Fabius and Vitellius.*

* *See further concerning the above Chronology, the 3d edition of Bowyer's Conjectures*, 1782, 4*to. p.* 149, *compared with Preface, p.* 24—32.

A

KEY

TO

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE sacred writings, which Christians receive as divinely inspired, are called in general SCRIPTURE, or THE SCRIPTURES, a word which literally signifies WRITING, or THE WRITINGS. This title often occurs in the New Testament,* and was commonly applied in the time of our Saviour to denote the books received by the Jews as the rule of faith: it has since been extended to the writings of the Apostles† and Evangelists, as completing the whole of divine revelation; so that the writings of the Old and New Testament are indiscriminately called by Christians, by way of distinction, SCRIPTURE, or THE SCRIPTURES.

* 2 Tim. iii. 16. Luke iv. 21. † 2 Pet. iii. 16.

The whole collection of these sacred writings is called the BIBLE: This word originally signifies BOOK, and is given to the writings of the Prophets and Apostles by way of eminence. These collectively are called the BOOK, or BIBLE, the Book of Books, as superior in excellence to all others in the world.

The holy Scriptures are divided into the OLD and NEW TESTAMENT. The former contains the books written under the Old Dispensation of the law of Moses; the latter those published under the New Dispensation of the Gospel.

The NEW TESTAMENT (containing the inspired books written after Christ's ascension into heaven) is intitled in Greek Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ, a title which was early borrowed by the church from Scripture,† and authorized by St. Paul himself.‡

This title, according to the passages of Scripture, whence it is taken, should be rendered COVENANT. And in this view, THE NEW COVENANT signifies, "A book con- "taining the terms of the New Covenant be-

† Matt. xxvi. 28. Gal. iii. 17. Heb. viii. 8. ix. 15. 20.
‡ 2 Cor. iii. 14.

"tween God and Man." But according to the meaning of the Primitive Church, which bestowed this title, it is not altogether improperly rendered NEW TESTAMENT; as being that wherein the Christian's inheritance is sealed to him as a son and heir of God, and wherein the death of Christ as a testator* is related at large, and applied to our benefit. As this title implies that in the Gospel unspeakable gifts are given, or bequeathed to us, antecedent to all conditions required of us, the title of TESTAMENT may be retained, although that of COVENANT is most exact and proper.

The sacred writings of the New Testament are all handed down to us in the Greek Language, which was that most generally understood at the time they were written, and are part Historical, part Epistolary, and part Prophetical.† Of the former are,

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

The word ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ EVANGELIUM (GOSPEL) signifies in Greek authors any

* Heb. ix. 16, 17.

† Viz. Revelations.

joyful tidings, and is exactly answerable to our English word Gospel, which is derived from the Saxon words God (good), and Spel, (speech or tidings.) In the New Testament this term is confined to "The "glad tidings of the actual coming of the "Messiah; and is even opposed to the prophecies concerning Christ, (Rom. i. 1, 2.) So in Matt. xi. 5. our Lord says, "The "Poor have the Gospel preached to them:" i. e. The coming of the Messiah is preached to the Poor. Hence the Church gave the name of Gospels to the Lives of Christ, that is, to those sacred histories wherein the good news of the coming of the Messiah, with all its joyful circumstances, are recorded.

The Chronological Order of these sacred narratives, according to the most eminent criticks, who have considered this subject, is as follows:

TABLE

OF

THE HISTORICAL BOOKS,

With the Places when and where written, according to Mr. MICHAELIS.

Book.	Place.	A.D.
ST. MATTHEW.	JUDEA, or near it.	61
In Hebrew, for the use of the Hebrews.		
ST. MARK.	ROME.	61
For the use of the Romans, who understood not Hebrew.		
ST. LUKE.	ALEXANDRIA.	63 or 64
For the use of the Gentile Christians in Egypt, Greece, &c.		
ST. JOHN.	EPHESUS.	69
To refute the errors of Cerinthus and the Gnostics.		
The ACTS by ST. LUKE.	ALEXANDRIA.	63 or 64
For the use of Churches every where.		

Dr. MILL and Dr. LARDNER concur for the most part in these dates, &c. only the

latter thinks St. MATTHEW's Gospel was writ in Greek about A. D. LXIV ; that St. MARK's was also penned the same year ; and that St. LUKE's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles were first published in GREECE. —Dr. Mill thinks St. JOHN's Gospel was written so late as the year XCVII, not long before his death.

IT is the general opinion of these and almost all other Criticks, that the first three Evangelists had not seen each other's Gospels, when they composed their own, except St. MARK, who is allowed to have abridged that of St. MATTHEW : But an ingenious writer* has lately compared the several Gospels together in the original language, and thinks he hath discovered strong internal proofs of the contrary : he has therefore offered a new arrangement according to the following table.

* Dr Owen. See his Observations on the Four Gospels, 8vo. 1764.

A SCHEME

Of the Times, Places, and Occasions of writing the Gospels, according to Dr. OWEN.

Gospels.	Places.	A. D.
ST. MATTHEW'S.	JERUSALEM.	about 38*
For the use of the Jewish Converts.		
ST. LUKE'S.	CORINTH.	about 53
For the use of the Gentile Converts.		
ST. MARK'S.	ROME.	about 63
For the use of Christians at large.		
ST. JOHN'S.	EPHESUS.	about 69
To confute the Cerinthian and other Heresies.		

This ingenious writer thinks, St. MATTHEW wrote his gospel for the use of the Churches at Palestine, then composed of Jewish converts, and adapted to the condition of the times, and nature of their circumstances.

" When the Gentiles were admitted into the Christian Church, St. LUKE, as the ex-

* This and the Date of St. Luke's Gospel are controverted in the following Pages; however, the general Arangement may be allowed to stand here.

igence of their state required, strengthened their faith by another gospel, accommodated to their special use.

"And when the invidious distinction between Jew and Gentile had well nigh ceased, St. MARK, wisely rejecting the many peculiarities of these two Gospels, compacted a third out of their most important contents, for the benefit and instruction of Christians at large.

"And afterwards, when the church was infested by hereticks, St. JOHN undertook to confute their errors from the life and conversation of Christ: which produced the last of these Gospels; and afforded the author an opportunity of relating several remarkable things which had been omitted by his predecessors."

"These four Gospels, he thinks, form one complete SYSTEM OF DIVINITY: and if we read them in the order they are here placed in, we shall find them improving on one another, and yet all conspiring to one end, to a perfect representation of revealed Religion. Each of the authors consulted the writings of his Predecessors; and either

by the additions of facts—explanation of terms—or confirmation of doctrines, contribute something to the common stock and the general instruction of Christians. They likewise quoted each other's words, and thereby recommended each other's histories; by which means they became not only mutual vouchers for the truth of these genuine Gospels, but at the same time joint-opposers of all those spurious ones that were impiously obtruded upon the world. St. LUKE by his quotations referred his readers to the Gospel of St. MATTHEW. St. MARK again referred to both the former. And all three were approved of by St. John, and appointed to be read in Churches. And afterwards when he wrote his own, it was ushered into the world with the knowledge, approbation, and perhaps testimony of all the Asiatick bishops. Thus was the whole Evangelick History finally closed, and the Evangelical Canon established upon the firmest ground, and by the most venerable authority."

OF

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW.

THIS Gospel was written before the other three. The author of it was an eye-witness of most of the facts he relates, having been early called to the Apostolick Office by Christ himself.* Besides the name of MATTHEW, he had also that of LEVI, being the son of ALPHEUS; but not of that ALPHEUS or CLEOPHAS, who was the Father of JAMES, &c.† He was originally by profession a publican, or collector of the Roman taxes: His office consisted in gathering the customs of such commodities as came by the sea of Gallilee, and in receiving tribute from such passengers as went by water. This lucrative post he cheerfully quitted for the sake of Christ, to whom he became a faithful attendant and eye-witness of all his miracles.

* See Matt. ix. 9. Mark ii. 14.
† Matt. x. 3.

In what year St. Matthew wrote his Gospel is not agreed by ancient writers; some dating it in the year of Christ XLI, others in XLIX and others between the years LXI and LXIV. This last account is gathered from Irenæus, and is what the most judicious Modern Criticks* are inclined to prefer; not only as Irenæus was the most ancient of those who have given the circumstance of time, but for other reasons. The Hebrews suffered about that time a heavy persecution, which almost drove them to apostacy, and obliged St. Paul to write his Epistle to them. In these circumstances nothing could be of more expediency and use to them, than a history of the miracles and resurrection of Christ. It is most probable therefore that both his Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews were written with the same view, to preserve the Christians of Judea in the faith.

Again, this Gospel contains several plain predictions of the miseries and desolation of Jerusalem, and of the overthrow of the

* MICHAELIS is for the year 61. LARDNER is for 64. See also BASNAGE, &c.

Temple, &c. besides many other figurative intimations of the same thing, which could not safely be published to all the world in writing, till towards the conclusion of the Jewish state.

An ingenious writer† has lately proposed a much earlier date of St. MATTHEW'S Gospel: He indeed thinks that it was writ in a time of persecution, for the use of the Jews; but then he supposes it was in that first persecution, which raged in Palestine after the death of the Martyr Stephen: about the year of Christ XXXVIII, in the second year of the Emperor Caligula.

There is however a capital objection to this very early date; and that is, the great clearness with which the comprehensive design of the Christian Dispensation, as extending to the whole Gentile world, is unfolded in this Gospel. Whereas it is well known and allowed by all, that for a while our Lord's Disciples laboured under Jewish prejudices; and that they did not fully understand all his Discourses* at the time

† Dr. Owen. See his Observations on the Four Gospels, 8vo. p. 22.

* Vide John xvi. 12—14; and other passages.

they were spoken. They could not clearly discern the extensive design of the Gospel scheme, till after St. Peter had been at the house of Cornelius, and there received Gentile Converts into the Church without Circumcision ;‖ nor indeed till after the Gospel had been preached abroad in foreign countries by St. Paul and other Apostles.

Now if we turn to St. Matthew's Gospel, we every where find the enlarged views of his divine Master represented in too clear a manner to admit a doubt that the writer was ignorant of their full tendency and meaning. Thus he shews that the Apostles were to teach all nations*. He represents the spirituality and freedom of the Gospel :† And that our Saviour was designed to be a blessing to the Gentiles‡. That the same Evangelist understood the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews may be inferred from several passages§. He had also a distinct apprehension of the extent of

‖ Acts, Ch. x. This Event is placed by Chronologists about the year 39.

* Ch. xxviii. 19.

† Ch. xv. 10 20.

‡ Ch.ii. Ch. iii. 9.

§ Ch. viii. 10. 12. Ch. xxi. 33. 46. Ch. xxii. 1. 14.

our Lord's Kingdom and the progress of his Doctrine, when he recorded those parables in Chapter xiii. And it is probable he had some knowledge of the Gospel's having been preached out of Judea, when he put down that declaration concerning the woman in Ch. xxvi. 13.

There is also an expression used once or twice, intimating that some considerable space of time had elapsed between the event and the time when this Gospel was written. See Chap. xxvii. 8. and Chap. xxviii. 15.¶

Whoever weighs all these circumstances will rather be inclined to fix the date of this Gospel in the latter persecution of the Jewish Christians of Palestine about the year SIXTY-ONE, than in the more early one in THIRTY-EIGHT. For it is the unanimous opinion of Antiquity, that

"St. MATTHEW wrote his Gospel for the service of the Jews in Palestine* ; with

¶ See this argument handled more at large by Dr. Lardner, Supplement, Ch. v. Vol. i. The same Author has shown many advantages of the late publication of the Gospel in his Credib. Vol. viii. p. 124. 137.

* Origen, apud Euseb. L. vi. c. 25. Hieron. & Theophylact in Mat.—Vide Dr. OWEN, passim.

a view to confirm those who believed, and to convert, if possible, those who believed not." This opinion is supported by several passages of his Gospel. Thus the Evangelist begins with the Genealogy of Christ from Abraham; which, agreeably to the Jewish custom, he gives according to the LEGAL descent by Joseph his supposed father; deducing it down from Abraham through David, to show his title to the Kingdom of Israel. Thus also he refers often to Jewish customs; relates the most of our Saviour's discourses against Jewish errors and superstitions†; quotes the greatest number of passages from the Jewish Scriptures; answers the most considerable Jewish objections; and frequently makes use of the terms and phrases of Jewish Theology.

That this Evangelist wrote in a time of Persecution, appears from the many useful lessons which he gives to comfort and support the suffering Christians; and to moderate, win over, or at least deter, the persecuting Jews. With regard to the Chris-

† Ch. xxiii. 1—33.

tians, he informs them that their afflictions were no more than what they had been taught to expect, and had engaged to bear, when they embraced the Gospel*: That their sufferings were useful to them as trials of their faith †: That a cowardly desertion of the gospel would only expose them to greater calamities, and cut them off from the hopes of heaven ‡: That they might lawfully use means of preservation, when consistent with innocence§: That the observance of the rules of the Gospel was an excellent means to soften the fury of their enemies¶: And that it was better to suffer martyrdom, than by any base compliance to incur God's displeasure‖.

On the other hand, with regard to the unmerciful Jews, he tries to soften their prejudices, and engage them in the practice of meekness and charity**: To this end he inculcates the amiableness of a compassionate and benevolent disposition††: its advan-

* Ch. x. 21, 22. 34—36. Ch. xvi. 24.
† Ch. v. 11. Ch. xxiv. 9—13.
‡ Ch. x. 28. 32, 33. 39. § Ch. x. 16, 17. 23.
¶ Ch. v. 39. vii. 12. 24—27. Ch. v. 13—20.
‖ Ch. xvi. 25—27. Ch. x. 28. ** Ch. ix. 13.
†† Ch. v. 3—48. Ch. xviii. 23—35.

tages here, and rewards hereafter‡. He reminds them of the judgments inflicted on their fathers for the cruel treatment of the prophets, and that they might expect worse if they persisted in the ways of cruelty§: for that God, though long suffering, would at last vindicate his elect, and punish their oppressors with a general destruction¶.

St. MATTHEW is said by ancient writers to have written his Gospel originally in Hebrew or Syriack; out of which it was early translated, either by himself, or some other Apostolick writer, into Greek, as being the more universal language. However, some judicious Criticks among the moderns, by examining the internal structure of the Greek Text, have found reason to believe, that the ancients were mistaken in this respect, and that the Greek Copy is not a version, but the original*.

‡ Ch. v. 5. 7. 9. Ch. x. 40—42. Ch. xviii. 23—35. Ch. v. 21—26. Ch. xxv. 31—46.

§ Ch. xxiii. 27—39. Ch. x. 14, 15.

¶ Ch. xxiv. 1, &c.

* See LARDNER, JORTIN, DODDRIDGE, WETSTEIN, BASNAGE, &c. However, the contrary opinon is maintained with no slight arguments by MICHAELIS.

After all, whether the present Gospel was the original or the translation, it is agreed on all hands to be of divine authority, being published in the Apostolick Age; universally received by the Christian Church as authentick; and many passages of it being (as a learned writer has lately shown†) incorporated into the Gospels of St. MARK and St. LUKE, who have thereby born testimony to its genuine sense, and set their seals to its authority.

† See Dr. OWEN's Observations on the Four Gospels. By way of specimen compare Mark iv. 1—9, with Matt. xiii. 1—9. And Mark xiv. 26—46, with Matt. xxvi. 30—50. So again compare Luke iii. 4—6, with Matt. iii. 3, &c. Luke iii. 7—9, with Matt. iii. 7—10. Luke iii. 16, 17, with Matt. iii. 11, 12. Luke xii. 22—31, with Matt. vi. 25—33. Luke vii. 20. 22—28, with Matt. xi. 3—11,

OF

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK.

THIS Gospel is agreed to have been written by that MARK whom St. PETER affectionately calls his Son, i. e. his worthy disciple*, and whom the ancients affirm to have been the familiar companion of that apostle. He is also believed to have been the JOHN surnamed MARK†, to whose mother's house St. PETER retired when released by the Angel out of Prison‡, and who is the same JOHN that accompanied St. PAUL and Barnabas in their travels§. MARK was only his surname, which he had probably assumed in compliance with the Jewish custom, while he travelled among the heathens, to whom his Hebrew name of JOHN would have appeared too foreign.

His mother dwelt at Jerusalem, and the Christians assembled at her house¶; he

* 1 Pet. v. 13.
† See LARDNER, MICHAELIS, &c.
‡ Acts. xii. 12. § Ibid. ver. 25. ¶ Acts iii. 12.

was cousin to BARNABAS‖, and attended him and St. PAUL in their first travels among the Gentiles*, but he soon separated from them†, which occasioned a division between these two Apostles, when BARNABAS took him along with him another journey‡. However, when St. MARK lived at Rome about the time of St. PAUL's imprisonment, that Apostle had so good an opinion of him, that he reckons him among his fellow-labourers§, and had thoughts of sending him to Colosse¶.

St. Mark, even humanly speaking, was a very credible witness of the Life of Christ. He was strictly speaking an Evangelist, i.e. a Preacher sent by the Apostles to Jews and Gentiles without being confined to any particular church. What Timothy was to St. Paul, MARK was to St. PETER and Barnabas, and at last he bore the same relation to St. Paul himself. It was usual for such Evangelists to have extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost.** Hence we have just

‖ Col. iv. 10.
† Acts xiii. 13.
§ Philem. 24.
** 1 Tim. iv. 14, and 2 Tim. i. 6.
* Acts xii. 25.
‡ Ch. xv. 36—40.
¶ Col. iv. 10.

reason to believe that St. Mark wrote by inspiration: And as the primitive Church has transmitted to us his Gospel, as a book of divine authority, without ever entertaining the least doubts of his inspiration, we have no reason to consider it as a mere human composition.

St. MARK is universally allowed to have written after St. MATTHEW*, and a learned writer† thinks, he also wrote after St. Luke. The Gospels of these two Evangelists were written, that of St. Matthew with particular reference to the Jews, that of St. Luke with a view to the Gentiles; the Gospel of St. MARK (according to this supposition) was composed last of the three, in a still more simple form, and for more general use. It was written at the request and for the use of the Christian Church at ROME; which was at that time the grand metropolis and common center of all civil-

* M. Michaelis thinks that St. MARK had St. MATTHEW's Gospel chiefly before him, and wrote principally with a Design of publishing in a more known language (sc. the Greek) that which St. Matthew had written in Hebrew.

† Dr. Owen. See his Observations on the Four Gospels, mentioned above in the Introduction.

ized nations. St. MARK's Gospel is therefore a simple and compendious narrative divested of almost all peculiarities, and accommodated to the use of Christians in general.

As the other two Evangelists had been so full in their accounts of our Saviour's birth and infancy, this will account for St. Mark's passing over that Period of the history, and confining his narrative to the time of our Lord's publick mission. And as this had been so well related already, he had little more to do than to abridge the two former Gospels, varying some expressions, and inserting some additions, which he probably had from St. Peter. Whoever compares St. MARK with the other two Evangelists will find that he copies largely from both*, and takes one or other of them constantly

* See Dr. Owen's Observations, &c. passim. Compare in the Greek Mark iv. 1—9, with Matt. xiii. 1—9; where the parable of the Sower is taken from St. Matt. So again in the explanation of the Parable, ver. 15—20, he had his eye on St. Matt. ver. 19—23, till he comes to the conclusion, ver. 21, 22, 25, where he makes a transition to St. Luke, ch. viii. 16—18. Compare also, St. Mark i. 21—28, with Luke iv. 31—37, &c. &c. This co-incidence proves at least that one of these two Evangelists (St. Mark and St. Luke) had seen the other when he wrote. Which of them wrote first must be collected from other proofs.

for his guide, but chiefly St. Matthew: the order, which is his own, is very close and well connected. In his account of facts he is clear, exact, and critical; for he wrote for the perusal of a learned people: And he proceeds with caution, as it were to clear his Gospel from all objections.

His Exordium is singular; for whilst other Evangelists stile our Saviour "the Son "of Man," he calls him expressly "the "Son of God:" an august title, the more likely to engage the attention of the lordly Romans. With the same view probably he omits such particulars as might be of more use to his countrymen than to foreigners; as the genealogy of Christ; the massacre of the children at Bethlehem; the account of Jesus's birth; the sermon on the mount, which exposes the false morality of the Pharisees, to which the Gentiles were strangers; and in general the quotations of certain prophecies of the Old Testament. On the other hand, he adds some things for the sake of the Gentiles, to enable them to understand the History of Christ. Thus in Chap. vii. 2, he explains what was the

meaning of "defiled" or "common" among the Jews: and in ver. 3, 4, instructs his readers in the Jewish customs, which was unnecessary in St. Matthew. In Chap. xv. 21, having mentioned Simon the Cyrenian, he adds, that he was "the father of Alexander and Rufus," because both these persons resided at Rome, and were known to the Roman Christians*. And perhaps the young man mentioned in Ch. xiv. 51, 52, was a Roman, whose curiosity might lead him to know the cause of the tumult, and being a stranger might be the sooner suspected, and therefore apprehended. He had perhaps often told the story at Rome; and the Evangelist thought proper to confirm it. In this light it makes a good argument. All internal marks of this sort confirm the report of the ancients, that St. Mark wrote his Gospel chiefly for the use of the Romans.

The time when he wrote it† appears to have been about the end of the year LXII, or LXIII, the ninth of the emperor Nero, when

* See Rom. xvi. 13.

† See Dr. Owen's Observations, p. 76—80. Mill, &c.

the Church stood in need of all the Consolations of Religion, to support it under the afflictive weight of a most dreadful and cruel persecution.

The Greek language was at that time more in request at Rome, than the French is among us ; so that the most familiar letters of the emperor Augustus (which are still extant) are commonly either in Greek, or intermixed with Greek. We are not therefore to wonder that St. Mark, a foreigner, wrote his Gospel in that language, for the use of the Christian Church in general.

OF

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE.

THIS Gospel is generally allowed to have been written by that "beloved Physician, who is mentioned by St. PAUL in Col. iv. 14, and who appears from that passage to have been a Gentile.* Consequently he was neither one of the Seventy Disciples, nor an eye-witness of our Saviour's Miracles, as hath been sometimes supposed†; but we know that he was intimately acquainted with Apostolical Persons.

That St. Luke travelled with St. PAUL to Rome, and there assisted him some time, appears from several passages of scripture‡. From hence he is affirmed by the ancients, to have gone into Africa, and to have preached the Gospel at Thebes in Egypt. His intercourse with the apostles and eye-witnesses of the works of Christ,

* Col. iv. 11. compared with ver. 14.
† Luke i. 3.
‡ Acts xxviii. 13—16. Col. iv. 14. Philem. 24.

renders him an unexceptionable witness, as a man; especially, since he assures us, that he investigated every thing diligently*, and had drawn it from the fountain head.† And it is no more objection to the divinity of his book that he wrote from the information of others, than it is to the inspiration of Moses, that he took his first book from ancient records, and sometimes refers to other books‡: and therefore we may well receive the universal testimony of the Christian Church, that St. LUKE, under the direction of the HOLY GHOST, committed to writing those particulars, which he had received from infallible witnesses.

It has been the common opinion, that St. LUKE wrote later than St. Matthew and St. MARK: but the ingenious writer so often quoted§ thinks that St. MARK wrote last of

* Ἀκριβῶς. † Ἀνωθεν.

‡ Numb. xxi. 27.

§ Dr. Owen. See his Observations on the Gospels. He fixes the date of St. Luke's Gospel in A. D. 53; if so, it must have been written before St. Matthew's (see above, p. 50.): but as the contrary seems demonstrable from the passages of St. Matthew copied by St. Luke (see below), we must assign a later date to St. Luke's Gospel: unless we date St. Matthew's Gospel in 41, or 49.

the three; and this, as we have seen, has great appearance of reason.¶"

St. Jerom affirms, that St. Luke penned his Gospel on the borders of Achaia and Bœotia, which should seem to be at the time when he was attending St. Paul in his travels through Greece; under whose care and inspection he probably wrote it. It is agreed to be this Evangelist whom that Apostle expressly stiles, "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel†." And that St. Luke wrote agreeably at least to St. Paul's sense, will be evident to any one that compares the two passages quoted in the margin‡, where the Apostle and Evangelist have both used the very same words in Greek to describe the institution of the Lord's Supper: this co-incidence shews the agreement of their sentiments, whichever of them is supposed to have written first.

St. Matthew's Gospel being intended chiefly for the Jews, it was highly expedient that some inspired apostolical person should

¶ P. 60. † 2 Cor. viii. 18.
‡ Luke xxii. 19. 20. with 1 Cor. xi. 23—25.

write such a history of our Saviour's Life, as might satisfy the inquiries, and be adapted to the situation of the Gentile converts. This accordingly appears to have been the peculiar view of St. LUKE in his Gospel: for, writing to those who were far remote from the scene of action, and ignorant of Jewish affairs, it was requisite for him to descend to many particulars, and touch on many points, which would have been unnecessary when writing to the Jews. Hence he begins his history so much farther back than the rest, and is so careful in specifying times and places. Hence he gives the genealogy of Christ, according to his NATURAL descent from the Virgin Mary*, and carries it up to Adam: Shewing he was that seed of the woman, who was promised for the redemption of the WHOLE world.

With regard to the general construction of St. Luke's Gospel, it seems to be formed

* By interposing an easy parenthesis, the Pedigree in St. Luke is naturally connected with the family of Mary. "AND Jesus began to be, *or* was, when he began *his Min-* "*istry*, about thirty years of age; being (as was supposed, "the son of Joseph, *but*) *in reality the son of* Heli, *who was* "*the father of Mary.*" KIDDER.

nearly on the same plan with that of St. MATTHEW, whose very words are sometimes copied.† Indeed, as the Gentile converts suffered the same things from their countrymen that the Jewish Christians did from the Jews, it was necessary St. LUKE should adopt much the same points of instruction, both to support the poor persecuted Christians‡, and to soften and convert their malicious adversaries, of whom the Jews residing in the several countries were still the chief.* But as the rage and envy of the Jews proceeded now from another cause (for they persecuted the Gentile Christians for laying claim to the privileges of the Gospel), we shall accordingly find St. Luke's narrative peculiarly adapted to remove their prejudices, and obviate their objections; to soften and enlarge their minds, and deter them from their malicious proceedings.§

† See instances referred to above, in page 56; and others may be seen in Dr. Owen.

‡ Ch. vi. 20—23. xii. 4—12. 31, &c. xviii. 28—30.

* Ch. vi. 24—26. x. 12. xiii. 1—5. xix. 14—44.

§ Vide Ch. iv. 25—27. Ch. xx. 9—16. Ch. xv. 11—32. Ch. xviii. 7, 8. Ch. xiii. 1—5. xxi. 5, &c. Ch. xiii. 28—30. xiv. 16—24.

St. LUKE wrote in Greek, and (as appears from the beginning both of his Gospel and Acts of the Apostles) at the request of a Christian of distinction, whose name was THEOPHILUS. He calls him κρατιστε, or EXCELLENT, as we address certain persons with the title of EXCELLENCY. The same title in Greek is given in the Acts to the Roman Governor‡, and was equivalent to the Latin *Optimus*, or *Optimas*, which the Romans addressed to their principal Senators of the most ancient families. A great critick§ thinks this was some nobleman who dwelt in Upper Egypt, and that St. LUKE's Gospel was written about A. D. LXIII, in that country, near Thebes; which he supposes St. Jerom mistook for Thebes in Bœotia. He observes that the Syriack subscriptions represents this Gospel to have been published at Alexandria in Egypt, and he imagines many things in it were particularly expressed with a view to confute the

‡ Ch. xxiii. 26. xxiv. 3. xxvi. 5.

§ M. Michaelis. See his Lectures on the New Testament.

falsehoods of the EGYPTIAN GOSPEL, an erroneous narrative, whence Mahomet is believed to have extracted many of those false particulars of our Saviour's history, which he has inserted in his ALCORAN.

Perhaps St. LUKE's Gospel was first written in Greece, and republished along with the Acts when he afterwards was in Egypt. Be that as it may, the Date assigned above is probably the true one ; at least it appears pretty evident that St. LUKE's Gospel was written after the year LXI, if that be admitted to have been the Date of St. Matthew's Gospel.

OF

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.

THIS Gospel is universally agreed to have been written after all the rest, with a view of completing whatever was deficient in them all. This Evangelist, independent of his divine inspiration, must be allowed to have had a most perfect knowledge of the facts he relates; and as he undoubtedly examined all the other Gospels before he wrote, he is an authentick witness to their veracity. He was, according to the testimony of the ancients, of our Saviour's near kindred. Before he became acquainted with our Lord, he was a disciple of John the Baptist, and probably one of those two whom he sent to Christ*. Our Saviour honoured him with the most intimate confidence, and loved him beyond his other Disciples. He and Peter and James were (exclusive of the rest) witnesses of the raising Jairus's daugh-

* John i. 37—42.

ter, of Christ's transfiguration, and of his agony in the Garden. He was the only Apostle who stood under the cross when Christ was crucified. So that he was better qualified than any other to describe the Miracles and History of JESUS CHRIST. A very discerning writer* thinks that St. JOHN in the life-time of his blessed master wrote down some of the heads of his discourses: At least that his stile perfectly resembles that of those who relate the discourses of another from short heads taken down while they were spoken.

But we are to consider this Gospel not only as an historical narrative, but also as a controversial treatise, designed to confute various Heresies. For no sooner was the Christian Church established, but its doctrines were obscured, debased, and corrupted by errors and heresies of various kinds: the first Hereticks assumed the name of GNOSTICS, i. e. "knowing ones," pretending to superior light and knowledge. They were afterwards followed by the NIC-

* MICHAELIS. See his Lectures on the New Testament.

OLAITANS, whose false tenets were propogated by EBION and CERINTHUS. These heresies prevailed most in Asia. Wherefore the Asiatick Bishops desired St. John to draw up a refutation of them; and he, in compliance with their request, composed his Gospel with a view to put those Hereticks "to shame, and to shew that there is "one God, who by 'Christ' his Word "made all things, and that the Creator and "Father of our Lord were not, as they pre-"tended, distinct beings*, &c." Wherefore he does not relate the birth and parentage of Christ, or even those facts of which he, Peter, and James, were eye witnesses, exclusive of the other apostles; but he chiefly collects such discourses and miracles, as confirm the doctrines laid down in the first Chapter, which were counter positions to those of Cerinthus and other hereticks, who maintained the grossest errors concerning Christ.

CERINTHUS is said to have taught, 1. That the most high GOD was entirely unknown before the appearance of Christ, and

* Irænus, contra Hæres. L. iii. c. 2

dwelt in a remote heaven called *Pleroma*, with the chief Spirits or *Æons*†. 2. That this supreme God first generated an only begotten SON, who again begat the WORD, which was inferior to the first born. 3. That CHRIST was a still lower *Æon*, though far superior to some others. 4. That there were two high *Æons* distinct from CHRIST; one called, LIFE, and the other, LIGHT. 5. That from the *Æons* again proceeded inferior orders of spirits; and particulary one *Demiurgus*, who created this visible world out of eternal matter. 6. That this *Demiurgus* was ignorant of the supreme GOD, and much lower than the *Æons*, which were wholly invisible. 7. That he was however the peculiar God and protector of the Israelites, and sent Moses to them; whose laws and injunctions were to be of perpetual obligation. 8. That JESUS was a mere man, the real Son of Joseph and Mary. 9. That the *Æon* Christ descended upon him in the form of a Dove, when he was baptized; revealed to him the unknown father, and empowered him to work Miracles. 10.

† See the Introduction.

That the *Æon* LIGHT entered John the baptist in the same manner; and therefore that John was in some respects to be preferred to CHRIST. 11. That when JESUS had propagated the knowledge of God, and came to suffer, CHRIST left him, and fled to the uppermost heaven. 12. That Jesus Christ should reign on Earth a thousand years, and his disciples enjoy all sensual delights. Some of the Cerinthian sect denied also the Resurrection of the dead; and many of them maintained that Jesus Christ was not yet risen.

Now we shall find St. John's Gospel divided into three parts.

The 1st contains doctrines laid down in opposition to those of Cerinthus*.

The 2d delivers the proofs of those doctrines in an historical manner.†

The 3d is a conclusion or appendix, giving an account of the person

* Ch. i. 1—18. † Ch. i. 19.—xx. 29.

of the writer, and of the view he had in writing‡.

In what year this Gospel was written, is not agreed among the ancients. It should seem to have been before the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in the year of our Lord LXX, for St. John speaks of that city as still subsisting; "There is at Jeru-"salem by the sheep-market a pool, &c§." On the other hand it appears, from the Gospel itself, to have been written after the death of St. Peter, which is generally placed in the year LXVIII. For the other Evangelists, when they relate the cutting off the high priest's servant's ear, conceal the name of Peter, lest the Jews should have a legal pretence to prosecute him, and deliver him to the Romans to be capitally punished. Whereas St. John mentions him expressly by name*. Nor could St. John probably have interpreted the words of Christ, "Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and "another shall gird thee†," concerning the

‡ Ch. xx. 30, to the end.
§ Ch. v. 2.
*Ch. xvi ii. 10.
† Ch. xxi. 18.

manner of St. Peter's death, if it had been written before the Crucifixion of that Apostle; for before that time the words were ambiguous. This limits the writings of this Gospel to the year LXIX, a year expressly specified by an ancient writer. Others give the date of it so late as A. D. XCVII, but this is plainly confuted by the above arguments.

According to every computation, St. John is allowed to have closed the whole Gospel History, to have ratified and confirmed the former Gospel, and to have established the Evangelical Canon on the firmest Ground and most venerable Authority.

OF

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THIS forms a central or intermediate Book to connect the GOSPELS and the EPISTLES. It is an useful Postscript to the former, and a proper Introduction to the latter.

This divine History is evidently a second part or continuation of St. Luke's Gospel, as appears from the very beginning of it: and that both were written by the same Evangelist, is attested by the most ancient Christian writers. The subscriptions at the end of some Greek MSS. and of the copies of the Syriack Version, testify that St. Luke wrote the Acts at Alexandria in Egypt.

As the narrative reaches down to the year of Christ LXIII, the ACTS cannot have been written earlier than that year; and that they were not written much later, may be inferred from the subject being continued no farther, which otherwise it would prob-

ably have been : at least St. LUKE would have been apt to have given the issue of St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome, as what the Christian reader would have been curious to have known.

Considered as a mere human witness, St. LUKE was better able than others to draw up an authentick history of the Apostles, as he had accompanied St. PAUL in so many of his journies. As he was a physician by profession, he was able to form a sound judgment of the Miracles St. Paul wrought upon the diseased, and to make a credible report of them. But he seems not to have had the gift of healing himself ; for in Ch. XXVII. 8, 9, St. Paul, and not HE, healed the sick. His accounts are generally so full and circumstantial, that the reader is perfectly enabled to examine the facts himself, and to judge whether they were attended with any deception or not.

St. LUKE appears not to have intended to write a complete Ecclesiastical History of the whole Christian Church during the first XXX years after Christ's Ascension. For he almost wholly omits what passed among

the Jews after the conversion of Paul; though the labours and sufferings of the other Apostles could not but have afforded interesting materials.

If we examine the contents of this Book, we may observe two ends pursued in it.

1st, To give an authentick relation of the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and the first Miracles by which the truth of the Christian Religion was established. An authentick account of this was indispensably necessary, since Christ had so often promised the Holy Ghost to his Disciples: and if a Heathen were to receive this Gospel, he would naturally inquire, how it had been first promulged at Jerusalem.

2d, To impart those accounts which evince the claim of the Gentiles to the Church of Christ: a point particularly contested by the Jews about the time of St. Luke's writing the Acts. St. Paul was at that very time a prisoner at Rome, upon the accusation of the Jews, who became his en-

emies for having admitted the Gentiles into the Church.

Hence it is, that St. LUKE relates* the conversion of the Samaritans, and† the history of Cornelius, who, though he was not of the Circumcision, had, in consequence of a divine command, been instructed in the Gospel by St. PETER himself, to whom St. PAUL's opponents appealed‡. For the same reason he relates, Ch. xv. what was decreed by the first council at Jerusalem concerning the Levitical Law; and treats most fully of the conversion of St. Paul, and of his mission and transactions among the Gentiles.

The Acts of the Apostles may very properly be divided into seven parts, viz.

I. The account of the first Pentecost after Christ's death, and of the events preceding it, contained in Chap. i. ii.

II. The Acts at Jerusalem, and throughout Judea and Samaria, among the Chris-

* Ch. viii. † Ch. x. xi. ‡ Gal. ii. 6—21.

tians of the Circumcision. Chap. iii. ix. xii.

III. The Acts in Cesarea, and the receiving of the Gentiles. Chap. xxi.

IV. The first circuit of St. Barnabas and St. Paul among the Gentiles. Ch. xiii. xiv.

V. The Embassy to Rome, and the first Council at Jerusalem, wherein the Jews and Gentiles were admitted to an equality. Ch. xv.

VI. The second circuit of St. Paul. Ch. xvi. xix.

VII. St. PAUL's third Journey to Rome. Ch. xix. 21—28.

OF

THE EPISTLES.

THE sum and substance of the Christian Religion is contained in the History of the life and death, the doctrines and discourses, of our Lord in the FOUR GOSPELS. The epistolary writings of the Apostles were occasional, being intended to confirm the several churches to whom they are addressed, in the same Rules of gospel-faith and practice as they had been before instructed in; and accommodated to the disputes and controversies, errors and false notions, that prevailed among them.

The general method observable in these Apostolick LETTERS is, First, to discuss the particular point debated in the Church, or among the Persons, to whom they are addressed, and which was the occasion of their being written: and in the next place to give such exhortations to every Christian duty and virtue, as would be at all times, and in every church, of necessary

and absolute importance; paying a particular regard to those virtues, which the disputes that occasioned the Epistle might tempt them to neglect. Now the former part of these epistolary writings cannot be rightly understood, but by attending carefully to the state of the question there determined. Therefore the errors and vain disputes concerning Faith and Works, Justification and Sanctification, Election and Reprobation, &c. which have so long vexed and distracted the minds of Christians, have all arisen from one grand mistake of applying to themselves or other particular persons now, certain phrases or passages which plainly referred to the THEN state and condition, not of particular persons, but of whole churches, whether Jewish or Gentile, of those times. Perplexed and puzzled with these knotty points, many well-meaning Christians have been drawn aside from paying a due regard to those moral and weighty exhortations, which are most easy to be understood, and of infinite obligation to be put in practice*.

* Vid. Pyle.

Of the Epistles, XIV are by St. Paul, which are not placed according to the order of time in which they were written; but according to the precedent or supposed rank of the churches and persons to whom they are addressed: it will be proper therefore to exhibit here their Chronological order according to two eminent Criticks.

THE

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Of the EPISTLES, *&c. according to Mr.* MICHAELIS, *and others.*

Epistle to, or by,	Places where written.	A.D.
1 PETER.	JERUSALEM.	49
GALATIANS.	THESSALONICA.	51
1 THESSALONIANS.	CORINTH.	52
2 THESSALONIANS.	CORINTH.	52
1 CORINTHIANS.	EPHESUS.	57
2 CORINTHIANS.	MACEDONIA.	58
1 TIMOTHY.	———.	58
ROMANS.	CORINTH.	End of 58
JAMES.	Uncertain.	61
PHILEMON.	ROME.	62
COLOSSIANS.	ROME.	62
EPHESIANS.	ROME.	62
PHILIPPIANS.	ROME.	62

HEBREWS.	ROME.	63
TITUS.	NICOPOLIS.	Uncertain.
2 PETER.	Uncertain.	67
JUDE.	Uncertain.	Uncertain.
2 TIMOTHY.	ROME.	67
3 EPISTLES OF JOHN.	Uncertain.	70
REVELATIONS.	PATMOS.	54 or 96

A TABLE OF ST. PAUL'S EPISTLES,

With the Places where, and Times when written, according to Dr. LARDNER.

Epistles.	Places.	A. D.
1 THESSALONIANS.	CORINTH.	52
2 THESSALONIANS.	CORINTH.	52
GALATIANS.	CORINTH, or EPHESUS.	near the end of 52 or beg. of 53
1 CORINTHIANS.	EPHESUS.	the beg. of 53
1 TIMOTHY.	MACEDONIA.	56
TITUS.	MACEDONIA, or near it.	before the end of 56
2 CORINTHIANS.	MACEDONIA.	about Oct. 57
ROMANS.	CORINTH.	about Feb. 58
EPHESIANS.	ROME.	about Apr. 61
2 TIMOTHY.	ROME.	about May 61
PHILIPPIANS.	ROME.	bef. the end of 62
COLOSSIANS.	ROME.	bef. the end of 62
PHILEMON.	ROME.	bef. the end of 62
HEBREWS.	ROME, or ITALY.	in Spring of 63

A TABLE OF THE CATHOLICK EPISTLES AND THE REVELATION,

ACCORDING TO DR. LARDNER.

Epistle.	Place.	A.D.
James.	Judea.	61 or beg. of 62
The two Epistles of Peter.	Rome.	64
1 John.	Ephesus.	about 80
2d and 3d of John.	Ephesus.	between 80 and 90
Jude.	Unknown.	64 or 65
Revelation.	Patmos, or Ephesus.	95 or 96

OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

THIS celebrated Epistle was written by St. Paul from Corinth, when he was setting out for Jerusalem with the supplies which had been collected in Macedonia, and at Corinth; that is, according to some

Criticks*, in the beginning, or, according to others, towards the end of the year LVIII; which was the 4th of the emperor Nero.

The Christian Church at ROME appears not to have been planted by any Apostle; wherefore St. Paul, lest it should be corrupted by the Jews, who then swarmed in Rome, and of whom many were converted to Christianity, sends them an abstract of the principal truths of the Gospel, and endeavours to guard them against those erroneous notions, which the Jews had of Justification, and of the Election of their own nation.

Now the Jews assigned three grounds for Justification. First, "The extraordinary piety and merits of their ancestors, and the covenant made by God with these holy men." They thought God could not hate the children of such meritorious parents: and as he had made a covenant with the Patriarchs to bless their posterity, he was obliged thereby to pardon their sins. Sec-

* So Dr. Lardner, who thinks St. Paul came to Corinth in November, A. D. 57: and wrote this Epistle in February following. The other opinion is that of Michaelis. Vid. Rom. xv. 25—27.

ondly, " A perfect knowledge and diligent st udy of the Law of Moses." They made this a plea for the remission of all their sins and vices. Thirdly, " The works of the Levitical Law," which were to expiate sin, especially circumcision and sacrifices. Hence they inferred that the Gentiles must receive the whole law of Moses in order to be justified and saved.

The Jews' doctrine concerning Election was, " That as God had promised to Abraham to bless his seed, to give him not only spiritual blessing, but also the Land of Canaan, to suffer him to dwell there in prosperity, and to consider him as his church upon earth :" That therefore this blessing extended to their whole nation, and that God was bound to fulfil these promises to them, whether they were righteous or wicked, faithful or unbelieving. They even believed that a prophet ought not to pronounce against their nation the prophecies with which he was inspired ; but was rather to beg of God to expunge his name out of the book of the Living.

These previous remarks will serve as a key to unlock this difficult Epistle, of which we shall now give a short Analysis*.

1. The Epistle begins with the usual salutation, with which the Greeks began their Letters†.

2. St. Paul professes his joy at the flourishing state of the Church at Rome, and his desire to come and preach the Gospel‡. Then he insensibly introduces the capital point he intended to prove, viz.

3. The subject of the Gospel§, that it reveals a righteousness unknown before, which is derived solely from Faith, and to which Jews and Gentiles have an equal claim.

4. In order to prove this, he shews¶ that both Jews and Gentiles are "under sin," i. e. that God will impute their sins to Jews as well to Gentiles.

His arguments may be reduced to these syllogisms‖. "The wrath of God is re-
"vealed against those, who hold the truth

* See Michaelis.
† Chap. i. 1—7.
‡ Ver. 8—19.
§ Ver. 16, 17.
¶ Chap. i. 18.—iii. 20.
‖ Chap. ii. 1. 17—24.

"in unrighteousness; i. e. who acknowl-
"edge the truth, and yet sin against it.

"The Gentiles acknowledged truths;
"but, partly by their Idolatry, and partly
"by their other detestable vices, they sin-
"ned against the truth they acknowledged.

"Therefore the wrath of God is reveal-
"ed against the Gentiles, and punisheth
"them."

"The Jews have acknowledged more
"truths than the Gentiles, and yet they sin.

"Consequently the Jewish sinners are
"yet more exposed to the wrath of God*."

Having thus proved his point, he answers certain Objections to it.

OBJECTION I. "The Jews were well "grounded in their knowledge, and studied "the law." He answers, if the knowledge of the law, without observing it, could justify them, then God could not have condemned the Gentiles, who knew the law by nature†.

OBJECTION II. "The Jews were cir-
"cumcised." ANSWER. That is, ye are

* Ch. ii. 1—12. † Ch. ii. 13—16.

admitted by an outward sign into the Covenant with God. This sign will not avail you when ye violate that Covenant‡.

OBJECTION III. "According to this "doctrine of St. Paul, the Jews have no "advantage before others." ANSWER. Yes, they have still advantages; for unto them are committed the oracles of God. But their privileges do not extend to this, that God should overlook their sins, which, on the contrary, Scripture condemns even in the Jews*.

OBJECTION IV. "They had the Le-"vitical Law and Sacrifices." ANSWER. From hence is no remission, but only the knowledge of sin†.

5. From all this St. Paul concludes, that Jews and Gentiles may be justified by the same means, namely, without the Levitical Law, through faith in Christ: And in opposition to the imaginary advantages of the Jews, he states the declaration of Zechariah, that God is the God as well of the Gentiles, as the Jews§.

‡ Ch. ii. 25—end.
† Ch. iii. 20.
* Ch. iii. 1.—19.
§ Ch. iii. 29.

6. As the whole blessing was promised to the faithful descendants of Abraham, whom both Scripture and Jews call his Children, he proves his former assertion from the example of Abraham; who was an Idolater before his call, but was declared just by God, on account of his faith, long before his circumcision. Hence he takes occasion to explain the nature and fruits of faith*.

7. He goes on to prove from God's justice that the Jews had no advantages over the Gentiles, with respect to justification. Both Jews and Gentiles had forfeited life and immortality, by the means of one common father of their race, whom they themselves had not chosen. Now as God was willing to restore immortality by a new spiritual head of a covenant, viz. Christ, it was just that both Jews and Gentiles should share in this new representative of the whole race†.——————Chap. v. ver. 15, 16, amount to this negative question, "Is it not "fitting that the free gift should extend as "far as the offence ?"

* Ch. iv. 1. v. 11. † Ch. v. 12—end.

8. He shews that the doctrine of Justification, as stated by him, lays us under the strongest obligations of holiness‡.

9. He shews, that the Law of Moses no longer concerns us at all; for our justification arises from our appearing in God's sight, as if actually dead with Christ, on account of our sins; but the Law of Moses was not given to the dead. On this occasion he proves at large, that the eternal power of God over us is not affected by this, and that whilst we are under the Law of Moses we perpetually become subject to death, even by sins of inadvertency*.

10. Hence he concludes, that all those, and those only, who are united with Christ, and for the sake of his union do not live according to the flesh, are free from all condemnation of the Law, and have an undoubted share in eternal Life†.

11. Having described their blessedness, he is aware, that the Jews, who expected a temporal happiness, would object to him, that Christians notwithstanding endure

‡ Ch. vi. 1—end.
* Ch. vii. 1—end.
† Ch. viii. 1—17.

much suffering in this world. He answers this objection at large.‡

12. He shews that God is not the less true and faithful, because he doth not justify, but rather rejects and punishes those Jews who would not believe the Messiah§. In discussing this point we may observe the cautious manner in which, on account of the Jewish prejudices, he introduces it,¶ as well as in the discussion itself.

He shews that the promises of God were never made to all the posterity of Abraham; and that God always reserved to himself the power of choosing those sons of Abraham, whom for Abraham's sake he intended to bless, and of punishing the wicked sons of Abraham; and that with respect to TEMPORAL happiness or misery, he was not even determined in his choice by their works. Thus he rejected Ishmael, Esau, the Israelites in the desart in the time of Moses, and the greater part of that people in the time of Isaiah, making them a sacrifice to his justice.‖

‡ Ch. viii. 18—end.
¶ Ch. ix. 1—5.
§ Ch. ix. x. xi.
‖ Ch. ix. 6—29.

He then proceeds to shew that God had reason to reject most of the Jews then living, because they would not believe in the Messiah, though the Gospel had been preached to them plainly enough*. However, that God had not rejected all his people, but was still fulfilling his promise upon many thousand natural descendants of Abraham, who believed in the Messiah; and would in a future period fulfil them upon more; for that all Israel would be converted†. And he concludes with admiring the wise counsels of God‡.

13. From the Doctrine hitherto laid down, and particularly from this, that God has in mercy accepted the Gentiles; he argues that the Romans should consecrate and offer themselves up wholly to God. This leads him to mention in particular some Christian duties¶, viz.

14. He exhorts them to be subject to magistrates§; the Jews at that time being given to sedition.

* Ch. ix. 30.—x. end.
† Ch. xi. 1—32.
‡ Ver. 33—end.
¶ Ch. xii.
§ Ch. xiii. 1—7.

15. To love one another heartily‡. And,

16. To abstain from those vices, which were considered as things indifferent among the Gentiles§.

17. He exhorts the Jews and Gentiles in the Christian Church to brotherly unity.¶

18. He concludes his Epistle with an excuse for having ventured to admonish the Romans, whom he had not converted; with an account of his journey to Jerusalem; and with some salutations to those persons, whom he meant to recommend to the Church at Rome.‖

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

CORINTH was a wealthy and luxurious city, situated in Achaia, upon the Isthmus or neck of land which joins Morea to the rest of Greece. Near it were celebrated

‡ Ver. 2—10.
§ Ver. 11—end.
¶ Ch. xiv. 1.—xv. 13.
‖ Vide Michaelis.

those Isthmian games to which St. PAUL alludes in this Epistle. In this city St. Paul had spent two years, planting a Christian church, which consisted, like most of the others, of a mixture of Jewish and Christian converts. But having been absent from them about three years, they were over-run with great disorders, and split into various sects and factions.

This occasioned the following Epistle, which was written by St. PAUL, just before his departure from Ephesus*, about Easter† in the year of Christ LVII, in the third of the emperor Nero. It was intended, partly to correct some Corruptions and Abuses among the Corinthians, and partly to answer certain Queries they had proposed to him.

In his Introduction¶, he expresses his satisfaction at all the good he knew of them, particularly at their having the gift of the

* Acts xx. 31. 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9.

† So Michaelis infers from Ch. v. 7, 8. "Ye are unleavened," which he interprets, "Ye are now keeping the feast of unleavened bread."

Dr. Lardner dates this Epistle a year sooner.

¶ Ch. i. 1—9.

Holy Ghost for the confirmation of the Gospel.

And first, he corrects their corruptions and abuses.

1. He rebukes the Sectaries among them, and defends himself against one or more false teachers, who had alienated most of the Corinthians from him†.

2. He considers the case of a notorious offender, who had married his father's wife, i. e. his own step-mother: orders them to excommunicate this person, and to acknowledge no publick fornicator as a brother‡.

3. He reproves them for their covetous and litigious temper, which caused them to prosecute their Christian brethren before heathen courts of judicature.§

4. He cautions them against fornication, a vice to which they had been extremely addicted before they were converted, and which some of them still reckoned among the things indifferent, or which might be

† Ch. i. 10. iv.—end.
‡ Ch. v. 13. § Ch. vi. 1—9.

practised or let alone without breach of morality*.

In the NEXT place he answers certain Queries they had proposed.

And, first, he determines some questions relating to the marriage-state†.

2. He instructs them how to act with respect to Idol-offerings‡. It could not be unlawful in itself to eat the meat which had been offered to Idols; for the consecration of flesh or wine to an Idol did not make it the property of the Idol, an Idol being nothing, and therefore incapable of property§. But some Corinthians thought it lawful to go to a feast in the Idol-temples which at the same time were places of resort for lewdness; and to eat the sacrifices whilst praises were sung to the Idol¶. This was publickly joining in the Idolatry.—He even advises to abstain from such participation as was lawful, rather than give offence to a

* Ch. vi. 10—end.
† Ch. vii. 1—end.
‡ Ch. viii. 1. xi. 1.
§ Ch. x. 25—30.
¶ Ch. viii. 10. x. 20—22.

weak brother: which he inforced by his own example, who had abstained from many lawful things, rather than create offence to the Gospel.

3. He answers a third Query, concerning the manner in which women should deliver any thing in publick, when called to it by a divine impulse.* And here he censures the unusual dress of both sexes in prophesying, which exposed them to the contempt of the Greeks, among whom the men usually went uncovered, and the women veiled.

He also takes occasion here to censure the irregularities committed at their love-feasts, &c. and in the exercise of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, &c†.

4. He asserts the Resurrection of the dead; which some among the Corinthians doubted, and others denied.‡.

He then concludes with some directions to the Corinthian Church concerning the manner of collecting alms; promises them a visit; and salutes some of the members§.

* Ch. xi. 2—17. ver. 18—34. † Ch. xii. xiii. xiv.
‡ Ch. xv. § Ch. xvi. Vid. Michaelis.

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS.

ST. PAUL'S first Epistle had wrought different effects among the CORINTHIANS: Many of them entered into themselves; they excommunicated the incestuous man; requested St. Paul's return with tears, and vindicated him and his office against the false teacher and his adherents. Others of them still adhered to that adversary of St. Paul, expressly denied his Apostolical Office, and even furnished themselves with pretended arguments from that Epistle. He had formerly promised to take a journey from Ephesus to Corinth, thence to visit the Macedonians, and return from thence to Corinth*. But the unhappy state of the Corinthian Church, made him alter his intention†, since he found he must have treated them with severity. Hence his adversaries partly argued, 1st, That St. Paul was irresolute and unsteady; and therefore could not be a prophet. 2dly,

* 2 Cor. i. 15, 16. † Ver. 23.

The improbability of his ever coming to Corinth again, since he was afraid of them.

Such was the state of the Corinthian Church when St. Paul, after his departure from Ephesus, having visited Macedonia*, received an account of the above particulars from Titus†, and therefore wrote them his second Epistle about the end of the same year‡, or the beginning of LVIII.

The contents of this Epistle are these.

1. He gives the Corinthians an account of his sufferings to that time, and of the comfort he derived from meditating on the Resurrection§.

2. He vindicates himself against those who would not consider him as a true Apostle because he had altered his resolutions¶.

3. He forgives the incestuous man‖; and tells the Corinthians how much he longed for their amendment**.

* Acts xx. 1. † 2 Cor. vii. 5, 6.

‡ So Dr. Lardner, who dates it from Macedonia about Sept. or Oct. LVII.

§ Ch. i. 1—11. ¶ Ch. i. 12.—ii. 4.

‖ Ch. ii. 5—11. ** Ver. 12, 13.

4. He treats of the office committed to him of preaching the Redemption; and highly prefers it to preaching the Law; to which probably his adversaries had made great pretences. They had ridiculed his sufferings; which he shews to be no disgrace to to the Gospel or its ministers: and here he gives a short abstract of the doctrine he preaches*.

5. He shews it to be his office, not only to preach the Redemption by Christ, but to inculcate certain duties, and particularly that of flying from Idolatry (an oblique censure of those who attended the Idol-feasts†.)

6. He endeavours once more to win their confidence, by telling them how affectionately he was disposed towards them, and rejoiced at their amendment.‡

7. He exhorts them to a liberal collection for the Christians in Judea.§

8. He vindicates himself against those who thought him deficient in the evidences of his Apostleship, and imputed his caution,

* Ch. ii. 14. v.—end.
† Ch. vi.
‡ Ch. vii. 1—16.
§ Ch. viii. 1. ix. 15.

when at Corinth, to his consciousness of not being a true Apostle¶.

OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

THE GALATIANS were descended from those Gauls, who had formerly invaded Greece, and afterwards settled in Lower Asia. St. PAUL had preached the Gospel among them in the year LI, soon after the council held at Jerusalem*. Asia swarmed at that time with zealots for the law of Moses, who wanted to impose it upon the Gentiles†. Soon after St. Paul had left the Galatians, these false-teachers had got among them, and wanted them to be circumcised, &c. This occasioned the following Epistle, which an eminent critick‡ thinks was written in the same year, before St. Paul left Thessalonica: though others§

¶ Ch. x. to the end. Vid. Michaelis.
* Acts xvi. 6. † Acts xv. 1.
‡ Michaelis. § Dr. Lardner, &c.

date it about the end of the year LII, or in the very beginning of LIII, before St. Paul set out to go to Jerusalem by way of Ephesus.

The subject of this Epistle is much the same with that of the Epistle to the Romans; only this question is more particularly considered here, "Whether Circumcision, and the full observance of "the Levitical Law, were necessary to the "salvation of a Christian convert?"

It seems, these Judaizing Christians, whose indirect views St. Paul exposes*, at first only laboured to represent Circumcision as necessary to salvation, without obliging the Gentiles to observe the whole Levitical Law†; yet they insisted upon the Christians receiving the Jewish festivals and sabbatical years.‡.

Their principal arguments were,

1. "That the Apostles at Jerusalem, St. Peter in particular, and the whole Church at Jerusalem, considered Circumcision as necessary; that St. Paul was only a deputy

* Ch. vi. 12, 13. † Acts xv. 1. Gal. v. 3, 9.
‡ Ch. iv. 10.

from that Church, and his doctrine only to be regarded so far as it agreed with that of the church of Jerusalem." This obliged St. Paul to declare, not only that the Apostles at Jerusalem perfectly concurred with him, but also that he was an immediate Apostle of Christ.

2. "That St. Paul himself had changed his opinion, and now preached up the Levitical Law§." They urged perhaps that he had caused Timothy to be circumcised just before he came to them¶.

3. "That all the promises of God were made to the sons of Abraham; and that whoever would partake of Abraham's blessing, must, like him, be circumcised." This objection he fully answers.*

4. "That Isaiah foretold an approaching conversion of the Heathens, and promised children from among them to Sion, or Jerusalem; and therefore, if the Gentiles desired to be children of the Church of Jerusalem, they ought to conform to the rites of that church." In answer to this the

§ Gal. i. 8. 10. v. 11. ¶ Acts xvi. 3. Gal. ii. 3.
* Gal. iii. 7. iv. 18.

Apostle shews, that these children were not promised to the Jewish, but to the ancient or Jebusite Jerusalem†.

St. Paul frequently directs Christians to bear with the weakness of those Jewish converts who observed the Levitical Law‡. But the Galatian Church consisted of Gentiles; and the whole import of this Epistle is, that they should not be circumcised.

In the two last chapters are some practical exhortations, designed chiefly against the animosities and partialities which these disputes had bred among them.

OF THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

EPHESUS was the chief city of all Asia on this side Mount Taurus. St. PAUL had passed through it in the year LIV, but without making any stay*. The following

† Ch. iv. 19—31. The words, ver. 25, "Sinai is a mount in Arabia," are thought to be a gloss crept into the the text.

‡ Rom. xiv. Acts xxi. 23, 24. 26.

* Acts xviii. 19—21.

year he returned to Ephesus again, and stayed there three years†. During his abode there, he completed a very flourishing church of Christians; the first foundations of which had been laid by some inferior teachers. As Ephesus was frequented by persons of distinction from all parts of Asia-minor, St. PAUL took the opportunity of preaching in the ancient countries‡; and the other churches of Asia were considered as the daughters of the church of Ephesus; so that an Epistle to the Ephesians was, in effect, an Epistle to the other churches of Asia at the same time.

In the year LXI, St. Paul was carried prisoner to Rome for the first time; and during his confinement there, which was not very close*, he wrote the Epistles to PHILEMON, the COLOSSIANS, the EPHESIANS, and PHILIPPIANS.

Hence all these Epistles bear so great a resemblance in their style and manner. Of these four, a learned writer§ thinks the Epistle to the EPHESIANS was first writ-

† Ch. xix.
‡ Ver. 10.
* Acts xxviii. 31, 32.
§ Dr. Lardner.

ten by the Apostle in the spring A. D. LXI, as soon as conveniently could be, after his friends at Rome had taken a lodging for him, and he was settled in it.

This Epistle was intended to establish the EPHESIANS in the faith; and to this end, To give them more exalted views of the love of God, and of the excellence and dignity of Christ; To shew them they were saved by grace, and that the Gentiles (however wretched they had been once) had now equal privileges with the Jews; To encourage them, by declaring with what steadiness he (St. Paul) suffered for the truth, and with what earnestness he prayed for their establishment and perseverance in it; And finally to engage them to the practice of those duties, which became them as Christians‡.

The city of EPHESUS was distinguished by peculiar vices and sins, which are alluded to in this Epistle, and in those to TIMOTHY.

1. It was the genuine seat of the idolatrous worship of Diana, who was called

‡ Vid. Doddridge.

ΣΩΤΕΙΡΑ, or the Saviour Goddess: in opposition to which St. Paul calls the true Deity ΣΩΤΗΡ, or the Saviour God, in his Epistle to Timothy*.

2. The Ephesians were remarkable for the practice of superstitious arts.†

3. They were vain in their dress‡.

4. They were remarkable for lewdness and drunkenness, and gloried in obscenity of language§.

An eminent Critick¶ thinks the Christians of Ephesus were also tainted with the errors of the Essenes; an account of which the Reader will find below, in the Introduction to the FIRST EPISTLE to TIMOTHY.

OF THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

PHILIPPI was a city of no great extent, in Macedonia, near the borders of

* 1 Tim. i. 1. ii. 3. † Acts xix. 18, 19.

‡ See 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. § Eph. ch. v.

¶ M. Michaelis. See his Lectures on the New Testament.

Thrace. The Christian religion was first planted there about the year LI, by St. PAUL*, who left St. Luke and Timothy to carry on the work. He afterwards paid them a second visit†, and, it is probable, saw them afterwards a third time.

This Epistle was sent at the same time with the preceding, viz. A. D. LXII or LXIII. The design of it seems to be, To comfort the Philippians under the concern they had expressed for his imprisonment at Rome; To check a party spirit that had crept in among them; and to promote on the contrary an intire union and harmony of affection; To guard them against being seduced from the purity of the Christian faith by judaizing teachers; To support them under the trials with which they struggled; And, above all, to inspire them with a concern to adorn their holy profession by the most eminent attainments in the divine life‡.

* Acts xvi. † Acts xxi. 6.

‡ Vid. Doddridge.

OF THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

COLOSSE (or, as it was anciently written, Colassæ) was a considerable city of Phrygia in Asia-minor. St. Paul himself had not been at this city when he wrote this Epistle*, though he had some years before travelled through Phrygia. However, Epaphras had founded a Christian Church at Colosse, and probably in the neighbouring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis†. It is probable that some Colossians, who had heard St. Paul preach at Ephesus‡, might be converted by him; and among them PHILEMON, to whom St. Paul addressed his Epistle so intituled.

Now the Churches of Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, were exposed to more imminent danger of being seduced by false teachers, as they had not received the Gospel immediately from an Apostle, but from Epaphras; and as they might question,

* Col. ii. 1.
† Col. i. 7. iv. 12, 13.
‡ Acts xix. 10.

whether Epaphras did not err in some respects: this occasioned St. Paul's anxiety for them*, and induced him to confirm the Doctrine of Epaphras by this Epistle†, which was written from Rome about the same time with the preceding, A. D. LXII or LXIII. A learned writer‡ thinks this and the Epistle to PHILEMON were sent away together by Tychicus and Onesimus, although that to Philemon was probably first delivered.

The more immediate occasion of writing to the Colossians, was an Epistle St. Paul had received FROM the Laodiceans§, which an eminent Critick¶ thinks contained some written queries relating to the doctrines of the Essenes, and this Epistle was intended to answer them. What those Doctrines were, see in the Introduction to the FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

This Epistle to the Colossians is so like that to the Ephesians, both in language

* Col. ii. 1. † Col. i. 7. iv. 12, 13.
‡ Lardner. See also Michaelis.
§ Ch. iv. 16. ¶ Michaelis.

and contents, that the one will greatly illustrate the other.

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THESSALONICA was in St. PAUL'S time the capital of Macedonia. St. PAUL had preached the Gospel there in the year LI*: some few among the Jews received the Gospel; but a great multitude of those Heathens, who confessed one only true God†, became converts to Christ. Hence the majority of the Church consisted of native Heathens, who had formerly been Idolaters‡. The Jews, ever jealous of the admission of the Gentiles to the same privileges with themselves, raised such a disturbance, that St. Paul, with Silas, was obliged suddenly to withdraw: they even pursued him to Berea. He left Silas and Timothy there, and fled to Athens, ordering them to follow him§. Timothy did not

* Acts xvii. † Σεβόμενοι Ἕλληνες.
‡ 1 Thess. i. 9. § Acts xvii. 14, 15. 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

long continue there with St. Paul, but was sent back to Thessalonica, and, when he returned, found St. Paul at Corinth; where he resided a year and half* ; and in the former part of that time this Epistle was probably written, viz. about A. D. LII.

With regard to the state of the Church of Thessalonica, the knowledge of which is requisite to understand these two Epistles,

1. It consisted chiefly of Gentiles, and of some Jewish members. It is probable that the Teachers mentioned in the fifth Chapter† were converts from Judaism; at least, such Greeks as had before been proselytes to the Jewish religion.

2. This Church being still in its infancy, and oppressed by the powerful Jews, required to be established in the faith. St. Paul therefore in the three first Chapters endeavours to convince the Thessalonians of the truth and divinity of his Gospel, both by the miraculous gifts of the Holy

* St. Paul came there before the end of the year 51, and staid till the beginning of 53. Lardner.

† Ver. 12.

Ghost, which had been imparted; and by his own conduct when among them.

3. An error prevailed with respect to the doctrine of the last Judgment. The Thessalonians, like most of the primitive Christians, thought the day of Judgment would happen in their time. They imagined those, who lived to see it take place, would have great advantage over the deceased faithful, which was probably to consist on their entering immediately on the Millennium. This error he combats in the fourth Chapter.

4. Some of this Church who refused to subject themselves to the teachers, had at the same time given themselves up to disorder; and they seem to have carried on this unruliness, under a pretence of teaching or edifying others: On this account the Apostle gives the admonitions in the fifth Chapter*.

* Ver. 11—14.

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

THE second Epistle to the Thessalonians was sent from Corinth soon after the first, viz. A. D. LII. St. Paul found the Thessalonians still considered the day of Judgment as at hand, and that the disorders before reproved were still carried on among them. He therefore in this second Epistle shews, that the last day was still distant, from some prophecies not yet fulfilled; and gives them more particular directions how to conduct themselves towards those disorderly persons.

M. Michaelis thinks that 2 Thess. ii. 2. refers to some Epistles forged in St. Paul's name to propagate the above error; and to certain calculations and false prophecies applied to the same purpose.

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

WE have an account of TIMOTHY in the Acts of the Apostles*, and in other

* Acts. xvi. 1—3.

parts of the New Testament†, from which he appears to have been a youth of most excellent qualities, and almost constantly the companion of St. PAUL.

This first Epistle to him is by some dated, A. D. LXV, but by others on better grounds‡ about A. D. LVI, or LVIII, at the time of St. Paul's journey into Macedonia.§ This Apostle being obliged to retire from EPHESUS earlier than he intended, on account of the insurrection raised by Demetrius¶, left Timothy behind him, to restore perfect order in the Church, to fill the Ecclesiastical Offices, and to withstand False Teachers.

As some of the Ephesians would not obey him, and others attempted to force themselves upon him as Bishops and Ministers, St. Paul wrote this Epistle, which he might lay before them as his commis-

† 2 Tim. i. 5. Acts xiv. 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6. 1 Tim. iv. 12. Heb. xiii. 23. See also the address to 2 Cor. Philipp. Colloss. 1 and 2 Thess. Philem.

‡ See Michaelis, Lardner. The place where this Epistle was written is not certainly agreed; though it is likely St. Paul was either in Macedonia, or near it.

§ Acts xx. 1. ¶ Acts xix.

sion: So that it is rather to the EPHESIANS than to TIMOTHY.*

An eminent Critick† thinks this first Epistle to TIMOTHY, and those to the EPHESIANS and COLOSSIANS, were levelled against certain errors prevalent among them, which the ESSENES (a Jewish sect) had borrowed from oriental Philosophers: They held, 1. That God was surrounded by Demons or Angels, who were mediators with God, and therefore to be worshipped. 2. That the soul is defiled by the body; that all bodily enjoyments hurt the soul; which they believed to be immortal, though they seem to have denied the resurrection of the body, as it would only render the soul sinful by being reunited to it. 3. That there was a great mystery in numbers, particularly in the number Seven; they therefore attributed a natural holiness to the Seventh or Sabbath day, which they observed more strictly than the other Jews. They spent their time mostly

* See 1 Tim. 3. 18. iv. 6. 12, 13. v. 23.

† M. Michaelis.

in contemplation; abstained from marriage, and every gratification of the senses; used washings, and thought it sinful to touch certain things; regarded wine as poison, &c.

In opposition to these, St. Paul, in these three Epistles, shews the superiority of Christ to the Angels, and warns Christians against worshipping them. He censures the observation of Sabbaths; rebukes those, who forbade marriage, and the touching of certain things; and who delivered commandments of men concerning meats, and prohibited them. He permits Timothy to drink wine; blames those who abstain from nourishing their bodies; and enjoins bodily exercise. He cautions against a Philosophy, which teaches all these things; and against persons, who assume a great appearance of wisdom and virtue. He delivers Hymenæus over to Satan, because he pretended there was no resurrection of the flesh.

The same learned writer thinks the errors of the Essenes had found their way into these churches through Apollos*, who

* Acts xvii. 24. xix. 1—7.

was of Alexandria, in the neighbourhood of which Essenes prevailed; and also through the twelve Christians mentioned in Acts xix†, who appear but imperfectly acquainted with the Christian doctrines. He conjectures that "the vagabond Jews, Exorcists‡," were of this sect.

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

THIS Epistle, according to some Criticks,* was written by St. PAUL, at Rome, during his first imprisonment there, and was sent to TIMOTHY in the summer of the year LXI. But others† rather think it was written during the Apostle's last imprisonment there, not very long before he sealed the truth with his blood; which is commonly placed about A. D. LXVI or LXVII.

That TIMOTHY was at Ephesus, or in Lesser Asia, when this Epistle was sent to

† Ver. 1—7. ‡ Ver. 13.
* So Dr. Lardner. † So M. Michaelis, and others.

him, appears from the frequent mention in it of persons residing at Ephesus. The false teachers, who had before thrown this church into confusion, grew every day worse: insomuch that not only Hymenæus, but Philetus, another Ephesian heretick, now denied the Resurrection of the dead. They were led into this error by a dispute about words. At first they only annexed various improper significations to the word Resurrection, till at last they denied the thing; pretending that the Resurrection of the dead was only a Resurrection from the death of sin, and so was already past. This error was probably derived from the eastern philosophy, which placed the origin of sin in the body. This Epistle consists chiefly of affectionate advices to TIMOTHY, thenceforward to be active in opposing those false teachers, and in propagating the Gospel.

OF THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

THIS may be called an Epistle to the CRETANS. For St. PAUL meant not so

much to instruct Titus, as to furnish him with a rule to lay before the Cretans, to which he might appeal, whenever unworthy and unqualified persons attempted to obtrude themselves into the Episcopal office.

TITUS was a Greek,* and probably owed his conversion to St. Paul†; who, fourteen years after, took him with him to Jerusalem, to the great council held there in the year XLIX. And as Titus was of Gentile parents, St. Paul would not suffer him to be circumcised, that he might not abridge the liberty of the Gentile converts‡. Some years after, St. Paul dispatched him to Corinth, to bring him an account of the state of that Church§; and afterwards sent him thither again, to hasten the collection for the poor Christians in Judea¶. After this we hear no more of him, till he is mentioned in this Epistle as having been with St. Paul in Crete.

This Epistle, according to Dr. Lardner, was written towards the end of the year LVI, while St. PAUL was in Macedonia, or

* Gal. ii. 3. † Tit. i. 4. ‡ Gal. ii. 1—3.
§ Cor xii. 18. vii. 6. 13. ¶ Ch. viii. 6.

near it. But M. Michaelis and others think it was more probably written in St. Paul's last progress through the Asiatick Churches, between his first and second imprisonment at Rome; though the precise year they are not able to determine. Titus had been left at Crete, to settle the Church which St. Paul had probably established there in his first journey to Rome*, and afterward†. The Churches in Crete had not hitherto had any Bishops and Ministers: Titus was to appoint them; but he was to be upon his guard against some of the circumcision, who aspired to ecclesiastical offices.

The Island of CRETE was the parent of Roman and Greek Idolatry; and the Cretans so far excelled other nations in inventing gods, that they were called THE LIARS. They were also distinguished for unnatural vices and a spirit of sedition.

The Cretan converts to Christianity were indeed obliged to forsake Idolatry and the worship of Images: but as the Cretans were Egyptians by descent, and had long

* Acts xxvii. † Tit. i. 5.

intermixed the whims of Egyptian philosophy with Judaism, and as they had embraced Christianity very early, no Church was in greater danger of adopting the absurd and heathen genealogies of God, of his only begotten Son, and of the Æons. Hence St. Paul warns them against these errors*.

OF THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON.

PHILEMON seems to have been a substantial man at Colosse, who had a spacious house, in which a part of the Christian Church assembled, and in which travelling Christians were entertained.† The want of publick inns among the ancients made this hospitality needful; and it was particularly enjoined to Christians, to receive one another hospitably: but, as every individual was not in a condition to entertain Christian strangers, the Churches seem to have appointed one or more of

* Tit. i. 14. iii. 9. Vid. Michaelis.
† Ver. 22.

their principal members for this purpose†. This was the office of Deacons, so that Philemon had an office in the Church; and indeed he is by some of the ancients entitled Bishop of Colosse. Whatever his ministerial office was, he is by St. Paul called "his fellow labourer‡." His son Archippus, to whom this Epistle is also addressed, had just before been Deacon in the Church of Colosse§; he is accordingly mentioned with honour by St. Paul, who not only stiles him his fellow-labourer like his father, but also his fellow-soldier.

PHILEMON seems to have been one of St. Paul's first fruits of the Church of Ephesus, and not to have been converted like the rest by Epaphras, but by St. Paul himself*; having probably come to Ephesus while St. Paul was there.

This Epistle was written from Rome (at the same time with the Epistles to the Colossians, Philippians, &c.) about A. D. LXII, or LXIII. The occasion of it was this: Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had

† Rom. xvi. 22. ‡ Ver. 1, 2. § Col. iv. 17.
* Col. iv. 19.

robbed him, and fled to Rome. There St. Paul meeting with him, converted him to the Christian Faith, and, having kept him some time to be satisfied of his reformation, sends him back to his master with this letter; which has always been admired for its delicacy of sentiment and masterly address, and may be considered as a fine model of Epistolary writing.

OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THIS Apostolick letter, according to the best authors, both ancient and modern, was the genuine work of St. PAUL*; and, according to the ancients, was originally written in the Hebrew or Syriack language; out of which it was translated into Greek by some Apostolick person, who is believed to have been either St. Luke or Clement.

* Many proofs of this may be collected from this Epistle itself. It is evident from Chap. ii. 3, that the writer was not one of Christ's Disciples. See Dr. Larduer, who has fully discussed this point, and finds reason to give it to St. Paul.

Some eminent Criticks, however, among the moderns, find reason to think our present Greek copy was not a translation, but the original; and that the ancients were mistaken in this respect.

St. Paul, contrary to his usual custom, did not prefix his name to this Epistle, for a very obvious reason, that he might not too early awaken the prejudices conceived against him by the Jewish converts, which might have led them to throw it aside unperused. It was written towards the end of (or soon after) St. Paul's imprisonment at Rome*, A. D. LXIII, to the converted Jews of Palestine, here called Hebrews, as distinguished from the Hellenists, or foreign Jews. A severe persecution had deprived them of the Apostle St. James, and had rendered almost that whole church wavering in the faith. To confirm some, and to recover others from their apostacy, was the purport of this Epistle.

As the zealous defenders of the Mosaick Law would naturally insist on the divine authority of Moses, on the majesty and glo-

* Ch. x. 34. xiii. 22, 23.

ry attending its promulgation by the ministry of Angels, and the great privilege it afforded those who adhered to it: The Apostle shews,

I. That in all these several articles Christianity had an infinite superiority to the Law.

This Topick he pursues from Chap. i. to xi. wherein he reminds the believing Hebrews of the extraordinary favour shown them by God, in sending them a Revelation by his own Son, whose Glory was far superior to that of Angels† ; very naturally inferring from hence, the danger of despising Christ on account of his humiliation, which, in perfect consistence with his dominion over the world to come, was voluntarily submitted to by him for wise and important reasons ; particularly to deliver us from the fear of death, and to encourage the freedom of our access to God*. With the same view, he magnifies CHRIST as superior to MOSES their great legislator ; and, from the punishment inflicted on those

† Ch. i. throughout. * Ch. ii. throughout.

who rebelled against the authority of Moses, infers the danger of contemning the promises of the Gospel.† And as it was an easy transition to call to mind on this occasion that Rest in Canaan, to which the authority invested in Moses was intended to lead them; the Apostle hence cautions them against unbelief, as what would prevent their entering into a superior state of Rest to what the Jews ever enjoyed‡. This caution is still further inforced by awful views of God's omniscience, and a lively representation of the High-Priesthood of Christ§. In the next place, he intimates the very hopeless situation of those who apostatise from Christianity¶; and then, for the comfort and confirmation of sincere believers, displays to them the goodness of God, and his faithful adherence to his holy engagements; the performance of which is sealed by the entrance of Christ into Heaven as our Forerunner*. Still further to illustrate the character of our Lord, he en-

† Ch. iii. 1—13.
‡ Ch. iii. 14. iv. 11.
§ Ch. iv. 12. v. 14.
¶ Ch. vi. 1—9.
* Ch. vi. 9, to the end.

ters into a parallel between him and Melchizedeck, asto their title and descent; and, from instances wherein the Priesthood of Melchizedeck excelled the Levitical, infers that the glory of the Priesthood of Christ surpassed that under the Law†. From these premises the Apostle argues, that the Aaronical Priesthood was not only excelled, but consummated by that of Christ, to which it was only introductory and subservient; and of course, that the obligation of the Law was henceforth dissolved‡. Then re-capitulating what he had already demonstrated concerning the superior dignity of Christ's Priesthood, he thence illustrates the distinguished excellence of the New Covenant, as not only foretold by Jeremiah, but evidently enriched with much better promises than the Old§: Explaining further the doctrine of the Priesthood and intercession of Christ, by comparing it with what the Jewish High-Priests did on the great day of atonement¶. Afterwards he enlarges on the necessity of shedding

† Ch. vii. 1—17. ‡ Ch. vii. 18, to the end.
§ Ch. viii. throughout. ¶ Ch. ix. 1—14.

Christ's blood, and the sufficiency of the atonement made by it* ; and proves that the legal Ceremonies could not by any means purify the conscience ; whence he infers the insufficiency of the Mosaick Law, and the necessity of looking beyond it† : He then urges the Hebrews to improve the privileges which such an High-Priest and Covenant conferred on them, to the purposes of approaching God with confidence, to a constant attendance on his worship, and most benevolent regards to each other‡.

The Apostle having thus obviated the insinuations and objections of the Jews ; for the satisfaction and establishment of the believing Hebrews, proceeds

II. To prepare and fortify their minds against the storm of persecution, which in part had already befallen them, and was likely to continue, and be often renewed. He reminds them of those extremities they had endured, and of the fatal effects which

* Ch. ix. 15, to the end. † Ch. x. 1—15.
‡ Ch. x. 15—25.

would attend their Apostacy§ : calling to their remembrance the eminent examples of faith and fortitude exhibited by Holy Men and recorded in the Old Testament¶. He concludes his discourse with glancing at many other illustrious Worthies ; and, besides those recorded in Scripture, refers to the case of several, who suffered under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. 2 Maccab. chap. viii. &c*.

Having thus finished the argumentative part of the Epistle, the Apostle proceeds to a general APPLICATION ; in which he exhorts the Hebrew Christians to patience, peace, and holiness† ; cautions them against secular views and sensual gratifications, by laying before them the incomparable excellence of the blessings introduced by the Gospel, which even the Jewish Œconomy, glorious and magnificent as it was, did by no means equal‡ ; exhorts them to brotherly affection, purity, compassion,

§ Ch. x. 26, to the end.
¶ Ch. xi. 1—29.
* Ch. xi. 30. xii. 2.
† Ch. xii. 3—14.
‡ Ch. xii. 15—29.

dependance on the divine care, stedfastness in the profession of the truth, a life of thankfulness to God, and benevolence to man§: and concludes the whole with recommending their pious ministers to their particular regard, intreating their prayers, saluting them, and pronouncing on them a solemn benediction¶.

OF THE CATHOLICK EPISTLE OF ST. JAMES.

THIS and the following Epistles are probably called CATHOLICK or GENERAL, because most of them were written, not to particular churches, but to the Faithful dispersed throughout whole countries. The SECOND and THIRD EPISTLES of St. JOHN are added to them, only because they were written by the same hand that wrote the first, and would have been lost had they been copied separately.

§ Ch. xiii. 1—16. ¶ Ch. xiii. 17. to the end.

This Epistle was written by St. JAMES THE LESS, the son of Alpheus or Cleophas, stiled the brother, i. e. kinsman, of our Lord, who statedly resided at Jerusalem, and is said by the ancients to have been the first Bishop of that City: where he is believed to have suffered martyrdom in the former part of the year LXII; and to have written this Epistle a short time before his death: which a learned writer* thinks might be partly occasioned by the offence taken at this Apostolick letter.

It is generally understood to be addressed to the Jewish Converts to Christianity dispersed abroad in the more distant regions: and that the Apostle's design is partly to exhort the Christian Converts to constancy in suffering, and partly to warn them against certain Jewish vices.

But Dr. LARDNER thinks that this Epistle was written to all Jews, of every denomination throughout the world, whether Christians or otherwise: for this reason, the Apostle does not wish them grace or

* Dr. Lardner.

peace from Jesus Christ, though he does not dissemble his own Character; nor does he conclude with any Christian benediction: And though a large part of the Epistle is applicable to Christians, there are several paragraphs, which seem particularly addressed to unbelieving Jews.*

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THIS Apostolick Letter is probably addressed to such Gentiles as had forsaken Idolatry and believed in the true God, without having been circumcised, and who afterwards became Christians; such as Cornelius the Centurion; i. e. Christians from among the Proselytes: "Elect (or "declared to be such) through sanctifica-"tion of the Spirit†." The whole Epistle abounds in assurances that these converts were regenerate and become children

* Chap. iv. 1—10. Ch. v. 1—6, &c.

† Vid. ch. i. 2. compared with Acts x. 44—47. xi. 15—17.

of God, without Levitical sacrifices, merely through Christ.

This Epistle was written from a city called by St. Peter BABYLON: this, some think, to have been Babylon in Assyria, which, tho' demolished, might possibly have some few Christians in its neighbourhood; however the generality, both ancients and moderns, suppose it to have been a figurative name for Rome. But M. Michaelis proposes a query, Whether Jerusalem might not be shadowed under that name: He also thinks it was written so early as the year XLIX, soon after the great Council held there. But the more received opinion is, that it was much later; either in the year LXIII, or LXIV, or at latest LXV.*

St. PETER's chief design is, To confirm the doctrine of St. Paul, which the false teachers pretended he was opposing; and to assure the Proselytes, that they stood in the true grace of God†. With this view he calls them elect, and mentions, that they had been declared such by the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them‡.

* Dr. Lardner. † Ch. v. 12. ‡ Ch. i. 1, 2.

He assures them that they were regenerate without circumcision, merely through the Gospel and Resurrection of Christ§; and that their sufferings were no argument of their being under the displeasure of God, as the Jews imagined¶. He recommends it to them, to hope for grace to the end‖. He testifies, that they were not redeemed by the Paschal Lamb, but through Christ, whom God had pre-ordained for this purpose before the foundation of the world**.

OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF ST. PETER.

THIS second Epistle is supposed to have been written many years after the former, viz. in A. D. LXVII, a short time before St. Peter's martyrdom, which happened in LXVIII, and to which he alludes in one or two places.*

§ Ver. 3, 4. 21—25.
¶ Ver. 6—12.
‖ Ver. 13.
** Ver. 18—20.
* Ch. i. 13, 14.

The general design of this Epistle is, To confirm the doctrines and instructions delivered in the former Epistle; "To excite the Christian Converts to adorn and stedfastly adhere to their holy Religion, as a Religion proceeding from God, notwithstanding the artifices of false Teachers, whose character is at large described; and notwithstanding the persecution of their bitter and inveterate enemies."

The genuineness of this Epistle has been doubted, from the peculiar stile of the 2d Chapter, which is different from the other parts of St. Peter's writings. Bp. SHERLOCK supposes that the Apostle, describing in that Chapter the character of such seducers as endangered the faith of the Christian Converts, adopts the language and sentiments of some Jewish author, containing a strong description, in the eastern manner, of some false prophets in that, or an earlier age.

OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

THIS Epistle of St. John (if it is not rather a little Treatise) appears, as well as his Gospel, to have been written against Cerinthus: In it he also alludes to the pernicious doctrine of the other Gnosticks, especially in the admonitions to walk in the light, to keep undefiled from sensual sins, and to abstain from Idols. For whilst Cerinthus taught, the law of Moses was abolished; the others maintained, that eating things offered to idols, and fornication, were indifferent acts.

In opposition to those errors, St. John lays down three positions: 1. That it is necessary to walk in the light, and keep clear of fleshly lusts, in order to partake of the kingdom of God. 2. That it is necessary to keep the new commandment of loving one another. 3. That Jesus was Christ and the Son of God, not only in his baptism, but also at the shedding of his blood.

This little Treatise or Epistle is directed to all Christians, wheresoever dispersed;

and is supposed to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, by such criticks as apply c. ii. 18. to the last time of the Jewish state. Others suppose it to have been written after the Jewish war¶, about the year LXXX; and others even so late as the year XCI, or XCII.

OF THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF ST. JOHN.

THESE are improperly denominated Catholick or General, being inscribed to two single persons, the one to some lady of distinction, the other to Gaius, or Caius; probably the same person whom St. Paul at Corinth stiles his host*, and who is celebrated for his hospitality to his brethren. But a learned writer† rather thinks he was an eminent Christian, who lived in some city of Asia not far from Ephesus, where St. John chiefly resided after he had left Judea.

¶ So Dr. Lardner.

* Rom. xvi. 23. 1 Cor. i. 14. † Dr. Lardner.

These Letters are conjectured to have been sent about the same time with, or soon after, the former.

OF THE CATHOLICK EPISTLE OF ST. JUDE.

THIS was written by JUDE, or JUDAS, the brother of James the Less. The remarkable similarity between this and part of the second Epistle of Peter was probably owing to both writers drawing their character of the false teachers from the description given of the false prophets in some ancient Jewish author: and it is also possible that St. Jude might have the second Epistle of St. Peter before him. They both prove, against certain Hereticks (probably the Gnosticks), that a great day of judgment is impending, and conclude, from the judgments of God formerly exerted, that God will be an avenger of evil.

This is believed to have been written after most (if not all) the other Apostolical Epistles; when St. Jude was arrived at a very old age. Dr. Mill even dates it A. D.

XC: others suppose it to have been written much earlier; yet after that of St. Peter, about A. D. LXV, or LXVI.

OF THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN.

THIS prophetical book is agreed to have been written by St. JOHN the EVANGELIST, who, according to Eusebius, was banished to Patmos, an Isle in the Ægean Sea, and there received the visions contained in this book, in the last year of the reign of Domitian, about the year XCVI. Others suppose it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. This is the opinion of M. Michaelis, who dates it so early as the time of Claudius or Nero, long before St. John's Gospels or Epistles. In this he follows the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton, who concludes it must have been composed in an early period of St. JOHN's life, because the style, he thinks, abounds with Hebraisms, and is not penned in such good and fluent Greek as the Gospels and Epistles; which he supposes were written when the

Apostle had acquired a more perfect knowledge of the Greek tongue. Other criticks however do not allow so great a difference of language between this and St. John's other writings; at least not more than what they think may be occasioned by the difference of subject, arising from allusions to the prophetick books of the Old Testament, or from the abruptness and obscurity of the prophetick style. It is again urged, that the REVELATION mentions no other heresy, as flourishing, but that of the Nicolaitans*, which subsisted long before that of Cerinthus, against which St. John wrote his Gospel between A.D. LXV and LXVIII, and therefore the Revelation must have been written long before. In opposition to this, it is doubted whether the seven churches of Asia were founded so early as the times of Claudius or Nero; or had at least undergone such great changes and revolutions as are alluded to in this Book. It has likewise been thought improbable that the

* The NICOLAITANS, according to ancient writers, were a sect who taught the lawfulness of lewdness and idolatrous sacrifices: they were so called from one Nicolas their founder. By Nicolaitans in scripture are thought to be meant, in general, lewd and profligate persons, who aim at nothing but their own secular advantage.

Apostle should give this prophetick and mysterious Book before ever he had delivered a plain and simple narrative of the life of his master: the latter, as it would be of the greatest use to Christians, would naturally be first afforded them; and the Apostles would be most likely to lay down the great and fundamental doctrines of Christianity in general, before they would think of entering into the state of particular churches, or describe the events of future times, whether near or remote.

Some other arguments for the more early date of this book are given by M. Michaelis, and others; but, as they allow them all to be subordinate to that urged above from the uncommon prevalence of the oriental idioms in this book beyond what are found in the other writings of St. John, this will not be judged very decisive, if, after all, it should appear that this is no more than the natural consequence of the subject; and that St. John, expressing in Greek the images of the ancient Hebrew Prophets, had a particular reason for adopting their phraseology and idioms, as being inseparable from the prophetick style*: so that,

* See what is urged on the subject of Prophetick Style in Dr. Hurd's Lectures, referred to below. See particularly Sermon 9.

upon the whole, perhaps we may resonably abide by the express testimony of Irenæus†, that this sacred Book was written in the reign of Domitian ; as that ancient Father was a Disciple of Polycarp, who had been a Disciple of St. John himself.

But at whatever period of his Life the Revelation was composed, there is strong internal Evidence*, as well as the most convincing positive Testimony, that this book was written by St. John the Evangelist†. It is no less obvious that the contents are of a prophetick nature, and that they exhibit a series of visions, descriptive of very important events that were to succeed in the course of ages.

Many ingenious and learned men have undertaken to illustrate this sacred Book, and even to point out very precisely the particular events predicted by its inspired Author ; but their success has not always been answerable to their sanguine expectations. Perhaps a complete and perfect Commentary must be re-

† Advers. Hæres. lib. vi. cap. 30. p. 449. ed. Grab. See also Eusebius, Chron. lib. i. Ed. Scal. p. 80. Vide etiam p. 164. Lib. posterioris & Chron. Can. p. 208. Hist. Eccles. lib. iii. cap. 18. Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 14, 15.

* See Dr. Twells, M. Michaelss, &c.

† See Lardner, Doddridge, &c.

served for future ages, when many of the events have taken place, which are predicted in it, but remain at present unaccomplished.

However, the pious Student ought not to be discouraged from the perusal of these divine Prophecies: and it is certain that he could never sit down to consider them with so much advantage as he can at present, when he is furnished with so excellent an Introduction to the study of these and all other Prophecies, which regard the Christian Church, in the Lectures lately published by the learned and ingenious Preacher at Lincoln's-Inn.†

To this admired writer, it will be sufficient here to refer the Reader, and he will lead him to as excellent a Commentator in the great and admirable Joseph Mede: to whose works these New Lectures are a most useful Introduction. It will be sufficient here to give a short extract from the latter, to assist the reader in forming a distinct idea of the method in which the whole Book of the Apocalypse is disposed: which he will readily do, if he observes that it is resolvable into THREE great Parts.

† Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies concerning the Christian Church, and in particular concerning the Church of Papal Rome, in XLI Sermons, &c. by Richard Hurd, D.D.

The FIRST part is that of the EPISTLES to the Seven Churches, contained in the three first chapters. This, as containing little or nothing prophetick, is not all considered by Mr. Mede.

The SECOND Part (with which Mr. Mede begins his Commentary) is that of the SEALED BOOK, from chap. iv. to chap. x. and contains the fates of the Roman empire, or its Civil Revolutions; yet with a reference still to the state and fortune of the Christian Church.

The THIRD Part is that of the OPEN BOOK, with what follows to the end; and exhibits, in a more minute and extended view, the fates of the Christian Church, especially during its apostacy, and after its recovery from it.

This Third Division may, further, be considered as consisting of TWO Parts.

The FIRST contains, in chap. xi. a summary view of what should befall the Christian Church, contemporary with the events deduced in the second part, concerning the Empire; and is given in this place, in order to connect the second and third parts, and to shewtheir correspondence and contemporaneity. See Mr. Mede's Clavis, p. 424, and Comment. Apocalypt. p. 476.

The SECOND Part of the last Division (from chap. xii. to the end) gives a detailed account of what should befall the Christian Church in distinct and several of them synchronical Visions.

*** *Here we should conclude; but as the curious Reader may desire to be informed how the Predictions revealed in this book of St.* John *have usually been interpreted and applied by Protestants, we shall, consistent with our subject, subjoin, A KEY TO THE PROPHECIES CONTAINED IN THE REVELATION. This is extracted from the learned Dissertations of Dr.* Newton, *Bishop of* Bristol‡ : *to which the Reader is referred for a more full illustration of the several parts, as the conciseness of our plan only admits a short analysis or abridgement of them.*

A KEY TO THE PROPHECIES CONTAINED IN THE REVELATION.

NOTHING of a prophetical nature occurs in the first Three Chapters, except, 1. what is said concerning the Church of EPHESUS, that her "Candlestick shall be removed out of its place," which is now verified, not only in this, but in all the other Asiatick churches

‡ Dissertations on the Prophecies which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling, in the world, vols iii. 8vo.

which existed at that time; the light of the Gospel having been taken from them, not only by their heresies and divisions from within, but by the arms of the Saracens from without: And, 2. concerning the Church of SMYRNA, that she shall "have tribulation ten days;" that is, in prophetick language, ten years; referring to the persecution of Diocletian, which alone of all the general persecutions lasted so long.

The next five Chapters relate to the opening of the SEVEN SEALS; and by these seals are intimated so many different periods of the prophecy. Six of those seals are opened in the sixth and seventh chapters.

The FIRST SEAL or period is memorable for conquests. It commences with Vespasian, and terminates in Nerva; and during this time Judæa was subjugated.

The SECOND SEAL is noted for war and slaughter. It commences with Trajan, and continues through his reign, and that of his successors. In this period, the Jews were entirely routed and dispersed; and great was the slaughter and devastation occasioned by the contending parties.

The THIRD SEAL is characterised by a rigorous execution of justice, and an abundant provision of corn, wine, and oil. It commences with Septimius Severus. He and Alexander Severus were just and severe empe-

rors, and at the same time highly celebrated for the regard they paid to the internal felicity of their people, by procuring them plenty of every thing, and particularly corn, wine, and oil. This period lasted during the reigns of the Septimian family.

The FOURTH SEAL is distinguished by a concurrence of evils, such as war, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts; by all which the Roman empire was remarkably infested from the reign of Maximin to that of Diocletian.

The FIFTH SEAL begins at Diocletian, and is signalized by the great persecution, from whence arose that memorable Æra, the Æra of Martyrs.

With Constantine begins the SIXTH SEAL, a period of revolutions, pictured forth by great commotions in earth and in heaven, alluding to the subversion of Paganism, and the establishment of Christianity. This period lasted from the reign of Constantine the Great, to that of Theodosius the first.

The SEVENTH SEAL includes under it the remaining parts of the prophecy, and comprehends seven periods distinguished by the sounding of SEVEN TRUMPETS.

As the SEALS foretold the state of the Roman empire before and till it became Christian, so the TRUMPETS foreshow the fate of it afterwards; each TRUMPET being an alarum to

one nation or other, rousing them up to overthrow that empire.

Four of these TRUMPETS are sounded in the eighth Chapter.

At the sounding of the FIRST, Alaric and his Goths invade the Roman empire, besiege Rome twice, and set it on fire in several places. At the sounding of the SECOND, Attila and his Huns waste the Roman provinces and compel the eastern emperor Theodosius the second, and the western emperor Valentinian the third, to submit to shameful terms. At the sounding of the THIRD, Genseric and his Vandals arrive from Africa; spoil and plunder Rome, and set sail again with immense wealth and innumerable captives. At the sounding of the FOURTH, Odoacer and the Heruli put an end to the very name of the Western Empire; Theodoric founds the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy; and at last Italy becomes a province of the Eastern Empire, Rome being governed by a Duke under the Exarch of Ravenna.

As the foregoing TRUMPETS relate chiefly to the downfal of the Western Empire, so do the TWO following to that of the Eastern. They are sounded in the ninth, tenth, and part of the eleventh Chapter.

At the sounding of the FIFTH TRUMPET, Mahomet that blazing star appears, opens the bottomless pit, and with his Locusts, the Ara-

bians, darkens the sun and air. And at the sounding of the SIXTH, a period not yet finished, the four Angels, that is the four Sultanies, or Leaders of the Turks and Othmans, are loosed from the river Euphrates. The Greek or Eastern empire was cruelly "hurt and tormented" under the FIFTH TRUMPET; but under the SIXTH, it was "slain," and utterly destroyed.

THE Latin, or Western Church, being in no wise reclaimed by the ruin of the Greek or Eastern, but still persisting in its Idolatry and Wickedness; at the beginning of the tenth Chapter, and under the sound of this SIXTH TRUMPET, is introduced a Vision preparative to the Prophecies respecting the Western Church, wherein an Angel is represented having in his hand a little Book, or Codicil, describing the calamities that should overtake that Church. The measuring of the temple, &c. shews, that during all this period there will be some true Christians, who will conform themselves to the rule of God's word, even whilst the outer court, that is, the external and more extensive part of this Temple or Church, is trodden under foot by Gentiles, i. e. such Christians as, in their idolatrous worship and persecuting practice, resemble and out-do the Gentiles themselves. Yet against these corrupters of religion, there will always be some true witnesses to PROTEST, who, how-

ever they may be over-borne at times, and in appearance reduced to death, yet will arise again from time to time, till at last they triumph and gloriously ascend. The eleventh Chapter concludes with the sounding of the SEVENTH TRUMPET.

In the twelfth Chapter, by the Woman bearing a man-child is to be understood the Christian Church; by the great red Dragon, the Heathen Roman-empire; by the man-child whom the woman bore, Constantine the Great; and by the war in heaven, the contests between the Christian and Heathen religions.

In the thirteenth Chapter, by the Beast with seven heads and ten horns, unto whom the Dragon gave his power, seat, and great authority, is to be understood, not Pagan but Christian, not imperial but papal Rome; in submitting to whose religion, the world did in effect submit again to the religion of the Dragon. The ten-horned Beast therefore represents the Romish church and state in general: but the Beast with two horns like a lamb is the Roman clergy; and that image of the ten-horned Beast, which the two-horned Beast caused to be made, and inspired with life, is the Pope; whose number is 666, according to the numerical powers of the letters constituting the Roman name, Λατινος, *Latinus*, viz. Λ, 30. A, 1. T, 300. E, 5. I, 10. N, 50. O, 7. Σ, 200. (666.) Or its equivalent in Hebrew, רומיית

Romiith, viz. ר 200. ו 6. מ 40. י 10. י 10. ה 400. (666.)

CHAPTER XIV. By the Lamb on mount Sion is meant JESUS; By the hundred forty and four thousand, his church and followers; By the angel preaching the everlasting gospel, the first principal effort made towards a reformation by that publick opposition formed against the worship of saints and images by emperors and bishops in the eighth and ninth centuries; By the angel crying, "Babylon is fallen," the Waldenses and Albigenses, who pronounced the Church of Rome to be the Apocalypsick Babylon, and denounced her destruction; And by the third Angel, Martin Luther and his fellow Reformers, who protested against all the corruptions of the Church of Rome, as destructive to salvation.

Here we may put a period to this short Analysis of the REVELATIONS, as what follows seems not to be of such obvious interpretation as the preceding, and therefore the curious Reader will consult the Bishop's DISSERTATIONS themselves. In reading those or any other illustration of the Prophecies contained in this mysterious book, he will do well always to have before him the judicious work of JOSEPH MEDE, above quoted.

FINIS.